DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 384 300 HE 028 413

AUTHOR	Ralph, Monica
TITLE	Developing the College as a Learning Organisation.
INSTITUTION	Staff Coll., Bristcl (England).
REPORT NO	ISSN-0305-8441
PUB DATE	95
NOTE	222p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Staff College, Coombe Lodge, Blagdon, Britsol, BS18 6RG, England, United Kingdom (16 British pounds).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Coombe Lodge Report; v24 n7-8 1995
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Action Research; *Change Agents; *Change Strategies; *College Administration; Creativity; Educational Attitudes; Educational Change; Educational Improvement; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Motivation; *Organizational Change; Participatory Research; Social Support Groups; Stress Management
IDENTIFIERS	England; *Northbrook College (England)

ABSTRACT

This study sought to inform, guide, and facilitate improvements in organizational practice and the management of change at Northbrook College in the United Kingdom. Using an action research approach, it sought to develop a management culture which celebrates creativity and innovation and which recognizes the value of individual change agents and the need to support them. The study utilized structured interviews, log books, and focus groups to gauge the communication, motivation, creativity, stress, and support needs among 20 change agents and 6 supporters of change at the college. A total of 20 recommendations were developed from the study to enhance organizational practice at the college. Five appendixes contain a list of references, sample log books, comments on a staff support program, comments on the management of change, and a literature survey. (Contains 95 references.) (MDM)

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The Staff College

Developing the college as a learning organisation

by Monica Ralph

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Developing the college as a learning organisation

by Monica Ralph

Edited by Ernest Theodossin and
Pippa Toogood

Coombe Lodge Report
Volume 24 Numbers 7 and 8

The
Staff
College

Coombe Lodge Reports

The Coombe Lodge Reports are key reference texts for those involved with the management of post-compulsory education. Each issue focuses on a single theme relevant to the management of further and higher education.

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Published by The Staff College,
Coombe Lodge, Blagdon, Bristol BS18 6RG
Tel: 01761 462503 Fax: 01761 463140
Registered with the Charity Commissioners

Typesetting by Avonset, Midsomer Norton, Bath BA3 2JT
Printed by BPC Wheatons, Exeter

ISSN 0305-8441
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Developing the college as a learning organisation

by Monica Ralph

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The learning organisation is a Utopia which not only meets the market place pressures of rapid response and collective learning from mistakes, but which also creates organisations fit to house the human spirit.

Pedler *et al.* (1990)

Innovative organizations must be designed as learning systems that place primary emphasis on being open to inquiry and self-criticism. The truly innovative organization will need an ethos and holographic spirit where the innovative attitudes and abilities desired of the whole are enfolded in the parts. The challenge to design organizations that can innovate is thus really a challenge to design organizations that can self-organize. For unless an organization is able to change itself to accommodate the ideas it produces and values, it is likely eventually to block its own innovations.

Morgan (1986)

Acknowledgements

Action learning research cannot happen unless a team is prepared to spend time sharing observations, struggling for meaning, planning action. Without the honesty, perceptiveness and sensitivity of the Northbrook change agents and supporters, this research could not have happened. I thank them for their determination, integrity and good humour. They, in turn, would have had little to record in their log books if it were not for the ideas and actions of their colleagues. It is from the collective experience of the whole college that the change agent's perspective is derived.

The timing of the investigation is significant. The 12 months spanning incorporation was a particularly difficult, stressful period for the whole FE sector. Mindful of this my thanks go to all the following colleagues and consultants who supported, and in most cases shared in this research.

Anne Anthony, change support agent
Anne Berrington, change support agent
Liz Betts-Gosling, change support agent
Brenda Cook, change agent supporter
Ros Cook, change support agent
Carole Coren, desktop publishing
Nigel Cullum, change support agent
Tessa Cunliffe-Steel, consultant, American Express Occupational Health Department
Chris Ellis, change support agent
Jim Ellis, change support agent
Peter Greig, change support agent
Yvonne Griffiths, change support agent

Oliver Hawkins, change support agent
Steve Hayler, change support agent
Derek Haynes, change support agent
Christine Henry, consultant, University of Central Lancashire Centre for Professional Ethics
Elaine Irving, change agent supporter
Margaret King, Librarian, The Staff College
Bernard Markham, change support agent
Gill Marshall, change support agent
Julian Millerchip, change support agent
Rita Orford, change agent supporter
Vanja Orlans, consultant, Birkbeck College Stress Research and Control Centre
Gozina Pender-Takke, consultant, The Post Office Occupational Health Department
Sally Ratchford, change support agent
Sue Richardson, change agent supporter
Peter Ridge, change support agent
David Shepherdson, consultant, West Sussex Education Authority
Stephen Steadman, consultant, University of Sussex
Ernest Theodossin, MBA tutor, The Staff College
Barbara Thompson, change agent supporter
Michael Thrower, Principal, Northbrook College, Sussex
Jan Wagstaff, co-ordinator, West Sussex MBA programme
Pat Willcox, Directorate Office
Steve Williams, change support agent
Ann Woodgate, change agent supporter
Dave Yorath, change support agent

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PART I: THE RESEARCH BASE

CHAPTER 1: Introduction: the college context

CHAPTER 2: The research design

CHAPTER 3: The sample

No-one can resolve the crisis of reintegration on behalf of another. Every attempt to pre-empt conflict, argument, protest by rational planning, can only be abortive: however reasonable the proposed changes, the process of implementing them must still allow the impulse of rejection to play itself out. When those who have power to manipulate changes act as if they have only to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own. For the reformers have already assimilated these changes to their purposes, and worked out a reformulation which makes sense to them, perhaps through months or years of analysis and debate. If they deny others the chance to do the same, they treat them as puppets dangling by the threads of their own conceptions.

Marris (1974)

Chapter 1

Introduction: the college context

It has become commonplace to observe that the external environment of colleges is becoming increasingly uncertain, turbulent and unpredictable. The months and years of analysis and debate which Marris, writing two decades ago, accords to the reformers, be they internal or external advocates of change, seem a remote indulgence, fit to draw wry smiles from today's change agents. It is doubtful whether planners at national level can access the resources implicit in such lead times. Certainly within colleges innovation and change, both proactive and reactive, is currently conducted at a pace which precludes a 'reformulation' sense-making stage, even for those responsible for planning core strategic changes. College senior managers may well feel themselves to be 'puppets dangling by the threads' of the 'conceptions' of external agencies.

Planned change, within this scenario, has to accommodate the maintenance of an infrastructure to facilitate the meeting of annual targets and performance indicators within a shifting environment as the organisation adjusts its shape to meet challenges, anticipated and unanticipated. Linear, rational models of change fracture when, even within the process of anticipated change, the effect of a shuffle of agenda papers in a funding council meeting, the fluttering butterfly wing of chaos theory, renders attempts at precise prediction a chimera.

The complexity of the interaction between an organisation and the environment it simultaneously creates and reflects imposes further limits on prediction. As Morgan (1986) cautions, within the context of attempted proactivity:

> An individual or organization can influence or shape change, but the process is always dependent on complex patterns of reciprocal connectivity that can never be predicted or controlled.
> (Morgan 1986)

Within this whole the external tensions, contradictions and emerging opportunities are replicated within the organisation; but not by a parallel mirrored relationship. The effects are felt to different degrees of intensity, in varying clusters and with a different emotional glaze by individuals and by teams, all of whom are likely to need support in resolving what Marris refers to as the crisis of reintegration. At a systemic level, organisational developments enact, reflect and interpret the college's environment. Within this process managers attempt to second guess and balance the requirements of stakeholders and the needs and preferences of customers; quality assurance procedures are revised, an appraisal scheme is piloted, course teams modularise and prepare for GNVQs, admissions processes and procedures are reformulated and an accommodation strategy drawn up.

Within Northbrook, in the academic year preceding this investigation, the process of change was marked symbolically and tangibly through a restructuring into faculties involving a reduction from 13 teaching departments down to 10; during the investigation a further amalgamation reduced the number to nine with plans to reduce further to eight in the following term. The college itself was formed only six years before and includes within its corporate whole the cultures, histories and traditions of three previously separate colleges. Nine sites, with one more planned, perpetuate their own cultures, myths and dominant recipes. A broad portfolio of further and higher education courses brings a range of students with diverse experience, needs and expectations. The resultant underlying strata of subcultures causes tensions as well as creative synergy within the corporate whole and impacts on the process of innovation.

At an individual level, the changes are acknowledged, absorbed and internalised in a fragmented, discontinuous manner. Beneath the seemingly shared surface of policy statements, procedures and organisational charts, staff experience the changes in accordance with the 'multiple phenomenologies of the different role incumbents' (Fullan 1991).

The uneven pace of change outside fragments further as it is experienced at different paces and through different lenses by those inside the college. As the speed and discontinuity of the changes reduce the time available for consulting, even for informing, the varying interpretations of the 'shared' vision, fed by the multi-faceted nature of the organisational culture and its change-resistant myths and recipes, renders the task of communicating, motivating and supporting a challenge indeed.

The challenge has been picked up within Northbrook by change agents at all levels of the organisation. This investigation records aspects of their experience and seeks to uncover the values, expectations and needs of a small sample of them. Kanter (1984) cautions that, 'Corporate entrepreneurs acquire their power through mobilizing others (and being mobilized by them) as collaboraters; they are not "solo artists"'. Within the course of this investigation, the concept of 'change agent' is challenged, unpacked and reassembled as 'change support agent'. The elitist model of the change agent as dynamic, transformational leader is replaced by an egalitarian model which includes all those who, in a period of rapid, discontinuous change, work to achieve positive processes and outcomes within their areas of action and influence. The learning organisation develops out of the praxis and growth of its members and its promotion does not require a 'right first time' culture. What it does require is that change support agents develop the confidence and honesty to acknowledge and learn from their mistakes and that the organisation recognises, applauds and uses to advantage the integrity and the creativity of this approach. The logic of this development ultimately leads to a stage where all members of the organisation will be regarded as, and more importantly regard themselves as, 'change support agents'. At the risk of employing metaphor to derive normative guidelines, this surely should be the defining purpose of the learning organisation.

Chapter 2

The research design

THE AIM

As Director for Development at Northbrook I have overall responsibility, within the senior management team, for strategic planning, quality assurance, curriculum and staff development, staff welfare, student welfare and learning support. This may explain my concern to learn more about the process and experience of change within the college and my decision to focus, within this research, on the development of systems and processes to support staff acting in a change agency capacity.

My investigation aims to inform, guide and facilitate improvements in organisational practice with special reference to the effective management of change. It was conducted within a further and higher education college during the two academic terms leading up to incorporation on 1st April 1993 and the term following. Against a background of rapid discontinuous change the interplay of longer term proactive strategic planning and reactive tactical management impacts upon staff to a varying degree. The effect on individuals is likely to be related to their own contribution to the change process.

Within this context the focus of the research is the development of a management culture which celebrates creativity and innovation and which recognises the value of individual change agents and the need to support them. The aim of the investigation is to inform the process of managing change effectively with a specific focus on improving communication, enhancing motivation, reducing stress and encouraging creativity.

THE QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

To further the expressed aim of the investigation the following broad research questions were addressed:

Communication	What helps and hinders communication and information dissemination? How can systems and mechanisms be made more effective?
Motivation	How can motivation be increased? How can demotivation be addressed and reduced?
Creativity	How can creativity be fostered and supported? What are the processes and mechanisms through which this creativity can contribute to organisational development?
Stress	Which processes and events are experienced as stressors by those directly involved in promoting and supporting change? What are their preferred coping strategies?
Support	What are the perceived needs of those directly involved in promoting and supporting change? To what extent are these needs being met within the organisation?

From these questions the investigation objectives were derived and the instruments selected; these are presented in **Figure 1**.

The intention is, through meeting these objectives, to collect and interpret data based on the experience of individuals involved in the change process so as to inform the planning of individual support and, at a systemic level, to address organisational needs, identified through this individual focus.

Figure 1: Research objectives

Objective	*Instrument*
1 Within an action learning, collaborative framework, collect qualitative data related to communication, motivation and creativity within the organisation.	• Log book • Structured interview
2 Identify the needs and expectations of those promoting and supporting changes, i.e. the change agents.	• Needs identification
3 Explore and record the degree of match between those needs and expectations and their experiences.	• Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics
4 Facilitate the articulation of the change agents' perceived and experienced stressors and of their preferred routes to coping.	• NFER Occupational Stress Indicator • Log book • Support programme evaluation
5 Identify, facilitate and evaluate support mechanisms.	• Support programme and its evaluation
6 Identify holistic systematic frameworks within which organisational development aimed at enhancing the effective management of change can be promoted.	• Action plan • Elite sample in-depth interviews • Comparator organisation structured interview

THE RESEARCH MODEL

The action research approach

According to Elliott (1991), the fundamental aim of action research is to improve practice rather than to produce knowledge. Within the context of this investigation the practice is management practice to promote and support effective organisational change. For Elliott, 'The improvement of a practice consists of realizing those values which constitute its ends'. The values underpinning the observations and recommendations of the change agents and supporters sample were articulated and clarified as successive sets of data were analysed, interpreted and transmuted into action plans and interventions. And, as Elliott emphasises, 'such ends' (that is the values) 'are not simply manifested in the outcomes of a practice. They are also manifested as intrinsic qualities of the practices themselves'. Values such as respect, empathy and integrity, as desired ends of support mechanisms and processes should, in this model, also inform the practice through which the support is given, valuing, on an equal basis, receiver and provider, manager and managed.

Elliott's model of action research celebrates the complexity and richness of the qualitative data yielded through the form of approach and techniques employed in this investigation:

> Action research ... constitutes a form of inquiry which fully acknowledges the 'realities' which face practitioners in all their concreteness and messy complexity. It resists the temptation to simplify cases by theoretical abstraction but will use and even generate theory to illuminate practically significant aspects of the case. In action research analytic or theoretical understanding has a subordinate relation to the development of a synthetic or holistic appreciation of the situation as a whole.
> (Elliott 1991)

The research model for this investigation employs a range of complementary data sources selected to provide, in combination, a detailed overview of the current culture and practice of the organisation from the perspective of a sample of staff directly involved in devising and facilitating management processes and in experiencing their effects. It is anticipated that the emergent picture will inform and thereby aid the process of managing change.The change agents and supporters are regarded as co-researchers within this model. Reason (1988) describes a research method he terms co-operative inquiry. Drawing on the work of Heron (1971) he presents an approach where both research and subjects are self-directed, contributing together to the creative thinking and to the research action. Group and individual review meetings focused on the sharing and interpretation of qualitative data, on related theoretical debate and on action planning have aimed to inform the reflective, learning cycle often attributed to Kolb (Kolb and Boyatzis 1984) and described as follows by Reason:

> Thus the essence of co-operative experiential inquiry is an aware and self-critical movement between experience and reflection which goes through several cycles and ideas, practice, and experience are systematically honed and refined.
> (Kolb and Boyatzis 1984)

It is doubtful whether this investigation would be accepted by Reason as what he terms a 'full blown' co-operative experiential inquiry; to warrant this label it would have needed to involve all the sample contributing on an equal basis to each stage of the planning, action and interpretation of the evidence. This did not happen; as well as being a fully participating member of the change agent sample, I assumed the main responsibility throughout for selecting and designing the instruments, facilitating the process and for shaping the interpretative frameworks.

It is, however, likely that Reason would perceive the research model as a fellow traveller on the road to co-operative inquiry for it does conform to the minimum requirements he lays down:

> For a research strategy to claim the term co-operative inquiry, I would argue that the nature of the involvement of all participants should be openly negotiated, that all should contribute to the creative thinking that is part of the research, and that relationships should aim to be authentically collaborative.
> (Reason 1988)

VALIDITY

Where the researcher is fully involved in the process and where self-reported individual experience is the basis for the data there is a need to give serious considerations to issues of validity. Reason (1988) addresses these issues through an exploration of what he terms 'critical subjectivity'. He describes this as:

> A quality of awareness in which we do not suppress our primary subjective experience, nor do we allow ourselves to be overwhelmed and swept along by it; rather we raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the inquiry process.
> (Reason 1988)

Individual experience is honoured within a process which seeks to 'enhance that experience towards a critical subjectivity'. He quarrels with the very term validity on account of its associations with positivism and the implication that valid knowledge entails an accurate representation of an objective world.

> Since the paradigm of co-operative inquiry holds that we live in a participatory universe in which we co-create the world we seek to

> understand, this form of empiricism is unacceptable.
> (Reason 1988)

Walker (1985) presents a similar perspective in his exploration of the humanist view where what the researcher learns depends on the quality of interaction with the subjects, his or her ability to interpret and the ethical and social values he or she holds. A key to overcoming what could be perceived as a limitation in such research is implicit in Walker's observation that the qualitative researcher considers these influences 'explicitly' when analysing the data. As Jones (1985) observes in her presentation of depth interviewing in the guide to research methods edited by Walker, 'there is no such thing as presuppositionless research ... although we are tied to our own frameworks, we are not totally tied up by them'.

Provided both researcher and audience are aware of the influence of the interpretative frameworks of all involved in the research, and provided the potential for bias and contamination is explicitly acknowledged, such research can contribute a rich base of authentic data.

Shipley and Orlans (1988) go further, turning this potential limitation into an advantage:

> We place particular emphasis on 'researcher awareness', as we believe that an understanding of the relationship of the researcher to her/his subjects or clients, and to the variety of data collection methods in use, will enable us to make better judgements as to the validity of the data derived from the research.
> (Shipley and Orlans 1988)

Bailey and Bhagat (1987) draw attention to the contaminating effects of a range of subject behaviours within stress research. These behaviours include *response style*, where the individual conforms to a habitual way of responding, *reactivity* where a response is altered by the respondent through knowledge of being observed or assessed, *crystallization* where new levels of awareness and new attitudes are triggered by the investigation, *cueing* where the researcher unbeknowingly signals the desired response, *response set* where the respondents shape their responses to fit their assumptions about the purpose of the research and *consistency* and *priming* where the respondents attempt to appear logically consistent in their answers.

Each of these behaviours may have been represented in the sample's responses with regard to the range of instruments employed within this model. Where the risk is thought to be significant a caveat is included when the findings are analysed and interpreted.

Shipley and Orlans (1988) introduce a further potential threat to validity when they warn that we should recognise the limitations of data derived from structured instruments even where these are used in a 'client centred' way.

> Apart from the role of such instruments in the ordering and controlling of reality … their use can never tap the whole of a respondent's 'world view', being based as they are on a set of *a priori* categories.
> (Shipley and Orlans 1988)

The log book, support programme evaluation and elite sample in-depth interviews are included in the model alongside the more structured instruments in an attempt to penetrate further into the sample's 'world view'.

These, however, bring with them their own limitations with respect to validity. Issues of construct validity are particularly relevant with regard to the change agents' needs identification and analysis, the log book construct analysis and the models of stressors, coping strategies and support routes derived from the support programme evaluation which involves the operationalisation of concepts such as stressors and needs.

I have attempted to empathise with the research participants while recognising that I am constructing a second level of meaning linked to their individual constructions. I have sought to accomplish this through a reflective cycle of data collection, construct eliciting and interpretation, feedback, dialogue and refinement.

Beehr and O'Hara (1987) observe that when seeking to make the case that the operationalised variables actually represent higher order constructs such as stressors, threats to validity are more likely to arise where only one measure of the effect constru[illegible]he dependent variable, or of the independent variable (which in stress research is usually a method of treatment) is employed.

Within this investigation triangulation has been employed whereby a combination of data sources has been selected to yield multi-faceted images of the constructs derived. The fragility of the connection between the higher order constructs and their operationalised proxies is however recognised. Issues of construct validity with respect to specific instruments are raised in Chapters 4 to 10.

Aware of the difficulties encountered by stress researchers who have attempted to attribute a reduction in levels of stressors or strains to the effect of a stress-management programme (reported by Beehr and O'Hara 1987), and who have had to recognise that co-variance does not demonstrate causation, I decided to limit this stage research to a two term snapshot as against a comparison of support needs and perceived level of stress before and after the support programme intervention.

There remain, however, issues of post-study validity, the 'robustness of generalizability of the meanings inferred from the study outcomes' (Bailey and Bhagat 1987). The change agent sample was not selected to be representative of the college staff as a whole; its members are, if anything, unusual in that they are overtly committed to a developmental, proactive role and have benefited from a higher than average level of staff development support. Their very involvement in the research is likely to have increased their sensitivity to processes and events which can be patterned to fit the emerging data constructs. But what does 'generalizability' mean in the context of this investigation? The research aims to inform the process of managing change and thereby to facilitate improvement in related organisational practice. The significance of the data and the meanings inferred from the findings lies in their face validity and in the confidence with which managers and staff accept them as an authentic record of 'the way it is, at this time, in this college'. The extent to which they are accepted will to a large extent determine the reception with which the recommendations will be met.

THE RESEARCH MODEL

The configuration of data sources and instruments is presented in **Figure 2** (research model data sources).

The change agent, supporters and elite samples are described in Chapter 3 while Chapters 4 to 10 provide a detailed account of the origin and characteristics of each instrument with a discussion of its perceived strengths and limitations.

Figure 3 records the sequence in which the data were collected.

Figure 2: Research model data sources

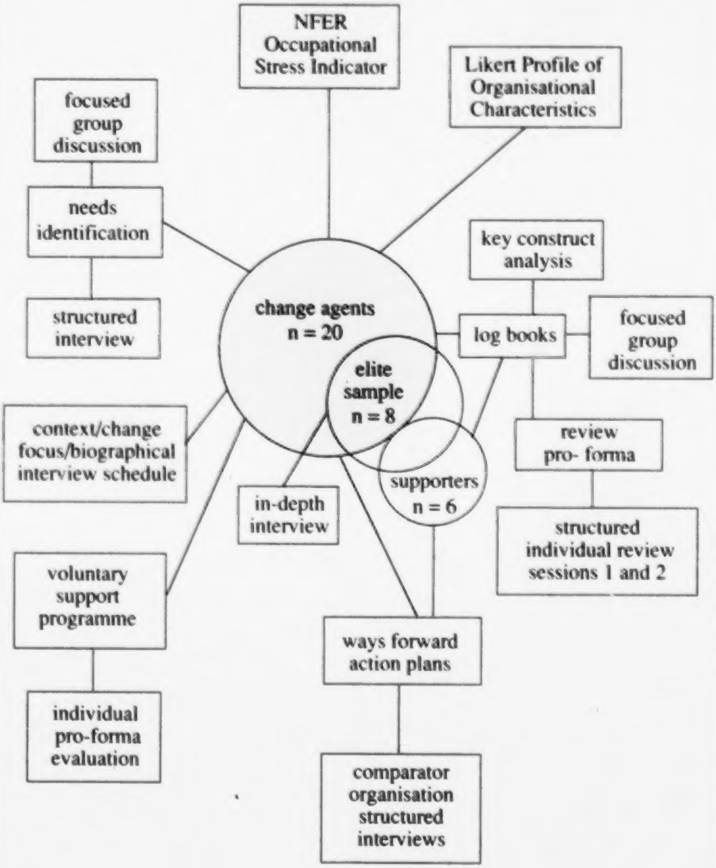

NFER Occupational Stress Indicator
Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics
focused group discussion
needs identification
structured interview
change agents n = 20
elite sample n = 8
supporters n = 6
key construct analysis
log books
focused group discussion
review pro- forma
structured individual review sessions 1 and 2
context/change focus/biographical interview schedule
in-depth interview
voluntary support programme
individual pro-forma evaluation
ways forward action plans
comparator organisation structured interviews

Figure 3: Timetable

1992	
July 2–12	• Sample receive log books at individual briefing sessions (two received in September)
July 7,8	• Group meetings re. log book procedure and support programme
October 10–30	• Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics
October 16,20	• Group meetings re. log book feedback and support programme
November 2 – December 15	• Individual review sessions • Change agents' needs identification
December 1,4	• Group meetings re. log book feedback, support programme and Likert Profile • NFER Occupational Stress Indicator (OSI)
1993	
February 5,23	• Group meetings re. log book feedback, support programme, OSI and needs identification
March 2 – April 4	• Individual review sessions • Change agents' needs identification
March 25,26	• Group meetings re. log book feedback, support programme and action planning
March 11,12 June 10, August 27	• Comparator organisation visits
May 4 – June 10	• Elite sample in-depth interviews
May 21	• Way forward planning meeting
July onwards	• Recommendations taken forward

From findings to policy decisions

The value of qualitative research may well be determined by the 'success or otherwise of policy decisions based on its findings' (Walker 1985), but as Walker cautions:

> Research is only one influence on the shape of decisions and generally a minor one … Even as a source of information, research may take second place to intuition, experience, the corporate memory, etc.
> (Walker 1985)

It is anticipated that the findings generated by this investigation, grounded as they are, to cite Walker again, 'on the experiences – the world view – of those likely to be affected by a policy decision or thought to be part of the problem' will add to the evidence and contribute creatively to the store of ideas, insights, and perspectives available to all those involved in policy-making within the college.

More often than not policy-making is concerned with taking decisions within a context of conflicting interests and with limited resources available. Grounded theory can make a significant contribution to the challenging process of strategic decision-making. Within this investigation the sample are co-researchers and share ownership of the recommendations. But the moral dilemma, the allocation and deployment of limited resources between competing needs, remains and ultimately it is the responsibility of management at all levels to make the policy decisions. The action plans presented in Chapter 9 and the recommendations arising from them are intended to inform and support this process.

Chapter 3

The sample

THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT UNIT

The Research and Development Unit (RDU) was established in 1991 with a remit to provide a support network for a team of staff who were registered for higher degrees and, through this membership, to provide a 'think tank' service for the senior management team of the college. During the period of this investigation membership totalled 16.

Its core mission is to promote and co-ordinate research into curriculum and organisation development and, within its current marketing plan, its objectives are expressed as follows:

- to encourage staff to take a proactive approach to their work and provide a support network for so doing;
- to facilitate the interchange of ideas and promotion of knowledge relating to practice and innovation in further and higher education;
- to support change and development within the college;
- to contribute to the identification of potential development;
- to promote dialogue between staff from different departments and faculties and to encourage a whole college culture.

With these aims it is perhaps not surprising that the unit members regard themselves as agents for development and change. The arena for their contribution to the change process varies according to their role, from whole college to within a course team but all share a will to influence policy and to learn from their actions.

THE QUALITY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The Quality Review and Development Group (QRDG) was established in 1992 with a remit to steer the college's total quality management (TQM) initiative. Its membership during the period of the investigation (totalling 10) is responsible to college senior management for monitoring the progress of those teams that have agreed reciprocal contracts with their line managers on the basis of action plan quality improvement targets.

As with the RDU its members include directors, heads of department, lecturers and support staff, all of whom are committed to promoting and facilitating organisational development; the claim of one member could well describe the ethos of the group: 'I consider myself to be an agent of improvement'.

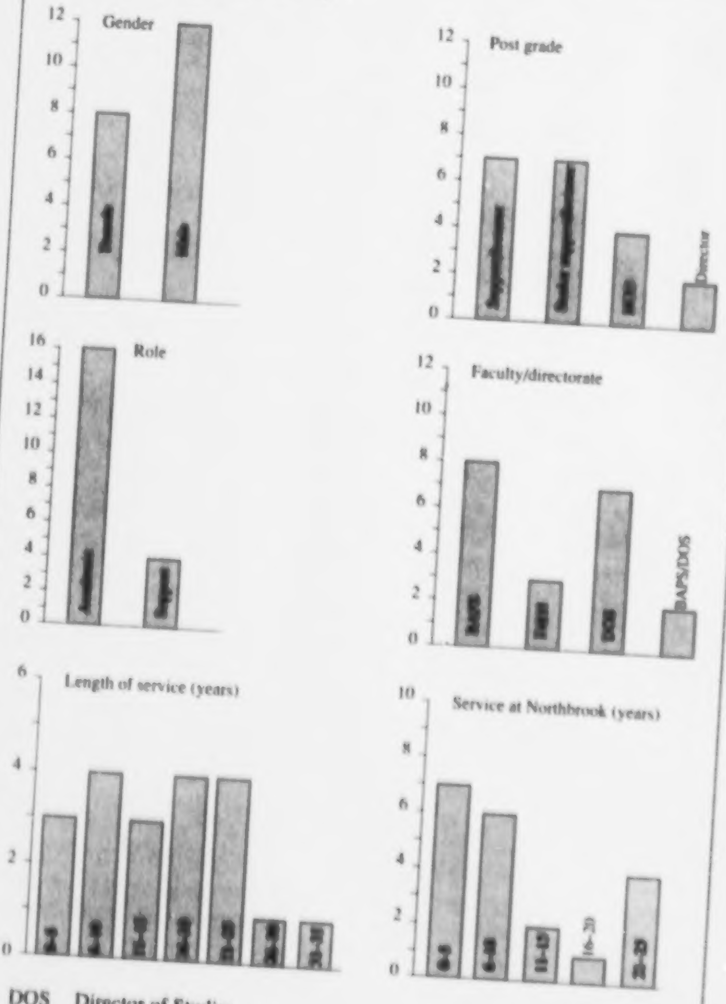
THE SAMPLE

The change agents

The 20 members of the change agents' sample represent the total membership of the RDU and the QRDG, six change agents being members of both teams. **Figure 4** presents a profile of the sample in terms of gender, post grade, role, faculty or directorate membership, length of service in education and length of service at Northbrook. The data on which this profile is based were collected through a biographical checklist completed during the first series of individual review sessions. The sample is not considered representative of the college staff. Although most of them would be unlikely to use the term 'change agent' to describe themselves, their membership of the RDU and of the QRDG signifies acceptance of a proactive development role.

Another major difference from the total college staff population relates to faculty and directorate membership where there are no representatives from the then Faculty of Engineering, nor from the cross-college Directorate of Administration,

Figure 4: Change agent sample



DOS Director of Studies
BAPS Faculty of Business, Administration and Professional Studies
D&H Faculty of Design and Humanities

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and where there is a preponderance of members from the Faculty of Business and Professional Studies and from the cross-college Directorate of Studies (since renamed Directorate for Development). There are also far fewer support than academic staff. This signals an apparently uneven pattern of staff involvement in organisational development initiatives which is addressed in Chapter 9 through an exploration of ways forward including a consideration of strategies to widen involvement.

During their first individual review session, which lasted between one and two hours, each change agent was asked to articulate his/her primary context and focus for change and preferred strategies and tactics for achieving the changes; the cues and responses are included in Appendix 3 and are summarised in **Figure 5** (individual change focus). The majority (12) emphasised attitude and culture change, identifying 'management processes' such as course team development, quality assurance and individual and team empowerment as the vehicles for achieving change. Two whole college systems were identified, staff appraisal and TQM. Strategies and tactics listed under 'Personal interaction' reveal a commitment to lead through example and a belief in the influence of individual change agents. This belief is expressed as a need through the needs identification process reported in Chapter 7.

Three to four months later, during the second series of individual review sessions, the change agents were asked whether they would still identify the same focus for change; 19 of the 20 said they would. For the one whose focus had changed, the stimulus had been a change in role:

> No. The focus has changed with my changed responsibilities although it is still concerned with attitude change and with establishing my own style of relationships with people.

Figure 5: Individual change focus (identified by the change agent sample at review session 1)

Individual emphasis (n=20): Attitude/culture change 12 Product change 7 Management process change 1

Focus			**Strategies/tactics**		
Attitude/culture change	*Product change*	*Management process change*	*Whole college system*	*Management processes*	*Personal interaction*
with regard to: • Quality ethos • Management ethos • Commercial orientation • Educational philosophy • Marketing • Role of lecturers • Change as beneficial • Lessening aggression • Reducing negativity • Support/care/welfare • Student support systems • Self-direction	• Course development • Curriculum development • Modes of delivery • Relationship with schools • Relationship with industry	• Communications	• Appraisal • Total quality management	• Course team development • Department development • Staff development • Quality assurance • Individual/team empowerment • Delegation of management responsibilities • Cross-college initiatives • Promotion/advertising	• Personal example • Demonstration of positive commitment • Encouragement • Pioneering/championing • Challenging • Team support • Peer culture/support

For the rest whose focus was unchanged, there had been some shifts:

> Yes, although the emphasis has shifted because of unanticipated curriculum changes.
>
> Yes, although priorities within it have changed as my role has changed.

Others felt there had been a process of clarification and narrowing of focus:

> Yes, although I am clearer now about the frameworks, the vehicle for change.
>
> Yes, but it has narrowed, become more directed.

The sample was also asked what strategies they were using, whether they had perceived any positive changes towards their goals or any blocks to progress. Cues and responses are included in Appendix 3 and summarised in **Figure 6.** As with review session 1 there was an emphasis on both 'management processes' and 'personal interaction'. Investors in People joins appraisal and TQM as an identified whole college system.

Responses show an awareness of the need to listen to colleagues, to work through teams and to identify systems.

> Personal contact where time permits; you don't build a good relationship by sending memos. By listening to people currently involved because they are aware of what the problems are even if they are doing it the 'wrong' way. By hearing how people say things. This indicates that I believe they are worth listening to. It gives valuable feedback and it establishes relationships.
>
> I've been working to identify systems, whole college approaches so as not to be *ad hoc*, not to dissipate energy in a fragmented way. And I've tried to listen to what colleagues are saying about their experience of change.

Figure 6 indicates the existence of a range of perceived positive changes, both in processes and in attitudes; it also catalogues continuing blocks, many emanating from management processes where the perceived shortfall could legitimately and effectively be addressed through the whole college systems identified.

Figure 6: Individual change focus (identified by the change agent sample at review session 2)

	Yes	*No*	*Neutral*	*n = 20*
Focus unchanged	19	1	–	
Positive change	17	1	2	
Blocks encountered	19	1	–	

Strategies

Whole college systems

- Appraisal
- Investors in People
- Total quality management

Management processes

- Action planning
- Targeting information/ opportunities
- Delegation
- Feedback mechanisms
- Advertising/publicity/ dissemination
- Positive feedback
- Formal committees
- Meetings

Personal interaction

- Individual contact
- Listening
- Demystifying
- Challenging
- Champions/informal leaders
- Student self-directed learning
- Team building

Positive changes

Processes

- Communication with/within course teams
- Meeting team targets
- Course development
- Support through participation/systems

Attitudes

- Motivation increased
- Staff confidence in systems
- Student response to learning styles
- Team cohesion/trust

Blocks

Management processes

- Inadequate monitoring
- Ineffective time management
- Goal incongruence
- Uncertainty impeding decision-making
- Bureaucracy/paperwork
- Insufficient team autonomy
- Slowness of communication
- Lack of feedback/perceived positive outcomes

Attitudes/feelings

- Culture resistant to change
- Fear/stress/anxiety
- Lack of trust
- Conflict over teaching styles

Resources

- Unmet resource needs, particularly course contact hours
- Insufficient time to be proactive
- Lack of continuity re. part-time staff

It would appear that the discontinuous nature of change in the external college environment is, from the perspective of the change agents, replicated within the college, enabling some to applaud positive changes in communications and team empowerment while others record blocks to progress.

> Communication with course teams is beginning to improve; we're helping them meet at least some of their targets.
>
> People are beginning to use systems such as appraisal to improve communications.

As against:

> Slowness of communication, amount of time spent in meetings, insufficient course team autonomy.
>
> Things are initiated and then go into a black hole. This is perceived by people generally and it demotivates. We have to see positive results.

What appears to unite the sample is their expressed determination to look for opportunities to turn blocks into progress and to take as many as possible of their colleagues along with them. A more detailed profile of the change agents, of their needs, values, perspectives and experience emerges from the data collected over three terms and analysed and interpreted in Chapters 4 to 10.

The change agent supporters

The supporters' sample comprised the six secretaries who worked closely with 11 of the change agents. As **Figure 2** indicates, this sample kept log books (discussed later), participated in the two series of individual review sessions and contributed action plans. One of them was also a member of the elite sample.

They are all female with length of service within Northbrook varying from 16 months to 17 years.

The elite sample

The elite sample was drawn from both the change agents and the supporters sample; seven from the former and one from the latter. Members were selected in April 1993 after the log book construct analysis and both series of individual review sessions.

During the review sessions it became apparent that there was a potential for all the change agents to contribute more by way of perspectives, insights and ideas and that the structured interviews representing my conceptual frameworks were, to an extent, restrictive. The elite sample depth interviews were introduced to enable contributions to be made not just from the viewpoint of the change agents and supporters but also in terms of their agenda, their priorities.

Selection was on the basis of specific contributions made during the individual review sessions, particularly with regard to the way forward in terms of their ideas for planning organisational change on the basis of the evidence accumulated and their interpretation of it. A further criterion was that the elite sample should include the range of roles represented in the base samples. **Figure 7** presents a profile of the sample. Their contributions in the form of responses to cues they themselves selected are reported in Chapter 9.

Figure 7: Characteristics of the elite sample of eight

Base sample	Change agents	7
	Supporters	1
Gender	Female	5
	Male	3
Post grade	Head of department	1
	Lecturer	1
	Support	1
	Senior lecturer	4
	Senior support	1
Role	Academic	6
	Support	2
	Substantial cross college responsibilities	5
Service at Northbrook	0–5 years	4
	6–10 years	2
	21–25 years	2
Personal experience of change during investigation	Role change	3
	Line manager	5
	Department change	3

PART II: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

CHAPTER 4: The log book

CHAPTER 5: The Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics

CHAPTER 6: The NFER Occupational Stress Indicator

CHAPTER 7: Change agents' needs identification

CHAPTER 8: Voluntary support programme evaluation

CHAPTER 9: The action plan

CHAPTER 10: Comparator organisation interviews

Instead of looking for clues in the structural and strategic patterns of organizations, an interpretive view requires that change is analysed from the perspective of the individual's definition of the situation as he or she interprets it. It is no longer sufficient to account for change as a sequence of processes sustained by a friendly and supportive organizational culture. What fundamentally matters are the cognitive and interpretive processes by which individuals either support change, facilitate it for others, or seek to destroy it. This interpretation, symbols and language, lie at the heart of this view.

Wilson (1992)

Chapter 4

The log book

THE INSTRUMENT

Exploring what he perceives to be a synergetic relationship between the continuous evaluation and re-affirmation of values and the planning of action within a reflective, action learning process Elliott (1991) asserts that:

> Improving practice, when viewed as the realization of the values which define its ends into concrete forms of action, necessarily involves a continuing process of reflection on the part of the practitioners.
> (Elliott 1991)

The collection of empirical data is an essential element of the process of 'reflectively improving practice'. Stressing a 'moral science' dimension to action research Elliott further asserts that:

> Within an ethical practice the quality of reflection about the ends-in-view embedded in it depends on the quality of the data one gathers about it.
> (Elliott 1991)

The log book was developed as an instrument to aid both the collection and recording of empirical data and the associated process of reflection. Designed to capture the individual, direct experiences of the change agents, its use is consonant with the professional culture that Elliot presents as the basis for and result of action research: 'one which supports collaborative reflection about practice and takes the experiences and perceptions of clients … into account in the process'. Within the management of change the change agents represent a key client group.

The log book is an A5 size sketch book, its boards covered in black book cloth; pages and cover are blank. Its very blankness was intended to encourage freedom, to signal a lack of prescription with regard to entry style, format and quantity. In practice its neutral status was challenged; some change agents and supporters, perceiving it as an invitation to draw, to be creative, felt initially intimidated.

A guide to the process of keeping and reviewing the log book (**Figure 8**) was pasted inside the front cover and a set of ground rules (included in Appendix 2) representing the ethical framework, was given to the sample of change agents and supporters at the same time as the log book. As the scope ground rule stressed:

> There is no expectation regarding depth/breadth/detail. This is not a competition to produce the most perceptive/stimulating/original log. Variety of approach, focus and presentation is the aim. The idea is to have fun and experiment.

A pro-forma review sheet established that feedback would be organised under the headings communication, motivation, creativity and support. The heading 'anything else' signalled that the sample was invited to extend this agenda. This they did to the extent of adding a heading stress which, by the first individual and group review sessions, had emerged as the dominant underlying theme, underpinning the recommendations for action. The log book was introduced individually during July 1992 to 18 of the sample of 20 change agents, which included myself and to the six supporters – all secretaries to members of the change agent sample. The remaining two members of the change agent sample were recruited to the college in September and received their log books then.

During the individual introductions the aims of the investigation were discussed and the log book ground rules stressed. Agreement was reached with the combined sample of 26. Two external consultants, a lecturer in research methodology from the University of Sussex and a West Sussex LEA adviser working respectively with the RDU and with the QRDG, were also asked to keep the log book, basing their entries on their reflections on the group processes they observed as a basis for feedback during the group review sessions. In July 1992 both groups held meetings where support was expressed for the investigation and in particular the concept of the log book.

Figure 8: Frontispiece of log book

Focus
- Communication
- Creativity
- Supporting change

Record
- Observations
- Reflections
- Insights
- Puzzles
- Myths
- Anecdotes
- Feelings
- Ideas

Using
- Words
- Doodles
- Cut and paste
- Colours
- Anything

Occasionally
- Review
- Analysis
- Recommend action and if you choose participate in it

Once during autumn 92 and spring 93

- Collate observations and recommendations
- Share them with me

Twice during autumn 92 and spring 93

- Share them with the rest of the team in a group meeting

End of spring term 93

- Contribute to group report and recommendations

Early summer term 93

- Receive project report and plan action

Monica Ralph

Formal group process reviews, lasting about two hours each, were held in October and December 1992 and in February and late March 1993. Individual review sessions lasting between one and two hours each were held during November/December and March. One pair of individual review sessions was held in January and April for a change agent who had been absent during December.

During the October group review participants were asked to share their general experience of log book keeping, and in December they were asked to contribute specific examples of entries as a basis for action planning; some of their contributions took the form of photocopies of log book pages. In February a draft construct analysis was presented to the groups for amendment, confirmation and debate leading to further action planning. The March meetings focused on action planning within an holistic systemic framework.

Individual reviews were conducted by means of a structured interview schedule. Feedback was sought on entries using the pro-forma review sheet and on the general experience of keeping the log book. The sample was also asked to share their perception of the influence of log book activity on their own motivation, creativity and level of stress and on the log book's contribution to their role as change agents and to the management of change generally. They were also asked to share their reflections on and evaluation of a voluntary support programme which is described and reported on in Chapter 8.

The log book entry data were processed by means of construct eliciting and analysis. Information collected through the log book review sheet was abstracted to form a schematic view of what helps and what hinders communication, motivation and creativity. Individual responses to the interview schedule cues were recorded and analysed to provide an assessment of the influence of the log book over the two review periods. The recorded responses are included in Appendix 2. The data in their original and processed form contributed to the empirical base from which the ways forward action plans were derived.

CHANGE AGENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE LOG BOOK

Low validity can result either from insufficient opportunity for reflection where, 'The inquiry has become supersaturated with experience: no adequate, coherent findings can be distilled out of it, or refined in it' or from an inadequate action base where, 'The inquiry suffers from intellectual excess: its findings have inadequate experiential support' (Heron 1988). An appropriate ratio between reflection and experience has to be determined within the context of the specific inquiry; there is, according to Heron, no general formula.

Within this investigation the log book provided the opportunity for experience to be recorded and reflected upon; the guidelines left individual change agents free to determine the balance. In practice the distinction is blurred: the act of transmuting personal experience into a communicable form, whether through visual imagery or written narrative, involves reflection. Individual log books represent collections of frozen moments along a process continuum from direct apprehension of experience through reflection to abstract conceptualisation.

The opportunity to share reflections upon the experience of keeping the log and the entries was provided through group meetings, held separately for the RDU and the QRDG, and through two series of individual review sessions.

Initial group meetings were held in July 1992, shortly after all but two of the eventual change agent sample had agreed to keep the log books. Support for the log book was confirmed, although a number of concerns were raised and discussed. Amongst these were two, subsequently borne out by the log book findings:

> Natural talkers may find it easier to relate to and use the log book than those less inclined to verbal expression.
>
> Although the activity might well be 'fun' it could also be depressing if it led to 'unfinished business' and brooding.

Three months later, in October, the two groups of change agents were asked to share their experience of log book keeping. They were reminded of the ground rules and it was stressed that there would be an opportunity for individual feedback later in the term. The session was to focus on general responses to the activity, although people could contribute specific insights and observations. Contributions followed spontaneously; further prompts were not required.

It was evident that most of the participants were experiencing difficulties in making entries:

> Things are so complex – too complex to do justice so I think about it but don't do it.

> It seems a little bit precious – I think of all the things that need to be done and I don't see the relevance of the book.

Some experienced difficulty in dealing with the emotional responses triggered in them by the activity:

> I felt quite busy and stressed. It's not in my nature to sit down and give [to log]. It increases stress. I prefer to deal with it or forget it.

A few were concerned about the negativity they were expressing:

> It tends to be negative – a 'complaints log' – about a college black hole; communication about change.
>
> I've put down lots of suggestions – not very creative – gripes.
>
> It's something to moan into … somewhere to put things that don't go anywhere else and I worry about what I've written.

As they exchanged experiences it was apparent that individuals were at different points along the experience-reflection continuum:

> It's non-narrative, non sequential – diagrams, jargon. I'm not at the stage of reflection, I'm just gathering in.
>
> Tension. I look at changes which are not managed well and distinguish between us managing to cope and suggestions as to how it might be managed better. I've identified changes but no suggestions.
>
> It's stopped being spontaneous and it's now too organised. I've begun analysis re. communication, etc.

Significant issues related to the management of change within the college began to emerge:

> We're all involved in change. Central issues – being made aware of what the reasons behind the changes are. When you get a dictate – someone plucks a card away from the house of cards you have built, your course, and it all comes down – you want to know why … communication is central to change.

Through such contributions it was reconfirmed that despite individual difficulties the log book had the potential to provide ideas and insights to inform and underpin action to support the management of change.

RDU attention turned to the design of a mechanism for communicating the experience encapsulated by the log books. Opinion was polarised between those who wished to retain control of their data by contributing to the filtering, distilling and organising process and those whose preference was to leave the analysis to me.

> It's important for me to be in charge of what I see as change.
>
> The people collecting the information should be involved – everybody should be in charge of their own strategy.
>
> As individuals we are not concerned with producing strategies for change. We are reacting with a blank sheet of paper – someone else picks out what is valuable.
>
> In the long-term Monica's filter will be the crucial element. At one level there is the primary source, undirected – it churns up the data – then it's submitted to a highly focused attention.

The eventual decision that the process of construct eliciting and analysis should be carried out only by myself was made on the basis of confidentiality. The ground rules had stated that the log books would be shared only with me; my own would be accessible, through a reciprocal agreement, to all the change agents.

It was further decided that, at the December meetings, provided some individuals proved willing, photocopies of log book pages would be made available to stimulate discussion. This might result in the planning of supportive interventionist action. These decisions were supported at the corresponding QRDG meeting. The two December meetings were duly provided with a compilation of 11 log book pages focused on communications, culture change, visioning, consultation and motivation. Discussion was stimulated by the questions, 'What struck chords in people?' and 'What could be ways forward to address the issues?'. A considerable degree of trust was demonstrated and a willingness to explore concerns as a group. Suggestions were made for individual and small group action to address some of the issues. The eventual membership of some of the action teams extended beyond the change agent sample.

The supportive role of discussion based upon the log books was acknowledged by both groups. A number of individuals expressed relief at realising that their experiences in seeking to manage particular changes found echoes in the literature on change theory and in others' experience. There appeared to be an emotional gain from the perception of common problems and anxieties.

Further observations on the general experience of keeping the log books were made by the change agents during their two individual review sessions. A comprehensive record is included in Appendix 2. Additional feedback was given on the range of approaches adopted:

> I see the aim as to get feedback from different areas of the college. You may get irrational, out of tune feedback but if you get enough then you can get an objective view of what's going on and you need to have that. I've not kept it like a diary as I went along but tried to keep a record when something went wrong and then returned to the entry to check progress, to keep track and analyse. This way I've related the problem to future positive development in that area.
>
> I've found it very difficult to do. I haven't been methodical although I've carried it around all the time. It reflects activity as against vision. Occasionally I go back and fill in weeks retrospectively, at a distance and therefore sweeping. I believe it would be more valid to do it close to the event, then it would tend to be more micro in concentration with thoughts at the time.

This diversity, though welcomed, has implications for the validity of the construct analysis reported in later in this chapter.

Some change agents referred to a lack of consistency in selecting experiences for recording:

> I've used it very sparingly – I forget it's there most of the time. I only seem to remember it in times of frustration. It's not consistent why some things get recorded and others don't.
>
> I could have got more from it if I'd found a way of disciplining certain 'reflective' time to do it. I've used it as an angry confessional which has benefits but I've done it for you rather than for me. If I'd done it for me I'd have done it a different way.

Some evidently valued the activity:

> It's a real form of stress management for me to put things into pictures. I wanted to start to analyse, to cross the action line from reflection so I've now begun to be more proactive. I find it enjoyable – it's the sort of thing I like doing.

And others did not:

> It's still not kept. I don't have a confessional relationship with paper.

Some were enthusiastic:

> I'm still getting a lot out of the process. I've tended to use more pictures, to represent situations, phases and then to reflect on them. I've also started to go back and add comments/ideas from other people.

And others were still struggling to accept ownership of the process:

> I completely misunderstood the purpose of it at the beginning so I put all my ideas/hurts in it – now I've extracted some. I'm not sure how committed I am to this research – I feel it's yours rather than mine but the idea is good – expressive and creative as against analytical.

There was evidence of different approaches to dealing with negative experience:

> I'm happy about the log book – I like writing things down. I was concerned it would become negative so I tried writing something at the end of each week and split comments on the page deliberately between positives and negatives. The theory is that if after a period of time the negatives have not converted to positives then nothing has moved on.

> It's plotted the development of my personal anger. In a way I wish I hadn't kept it because it's become very negative. It's negative evidence I would have forgotten and possibly been less angry and depressed as a result – but I also needed the release of writing down negative things.

Unexpected payoffs were reported:

> I'd find it difficult to use it in other ways than as a diary – I stay on the

> surface, I'm too busy to be deep. But now I've looked through the log it's telling me all sorts of things I didn't think it would tell me.

During the second series of individual reviews it became evident that the sample, even those who had been enthusiastic, were deriving less benefit from the process. As one change agent observed:

> I haven't used it since the last review. On looking back through it, a lot of good has come out of it. However, it seems to be so charged with negative feeling I don't feel I did myself much good. So, while I value the experience of doing it for a short while, it's not a process I would wish to continue. If I had continued it would have been more of the same sort of stuff and curiously I would have been doing it out of loyalty and respect for the research.

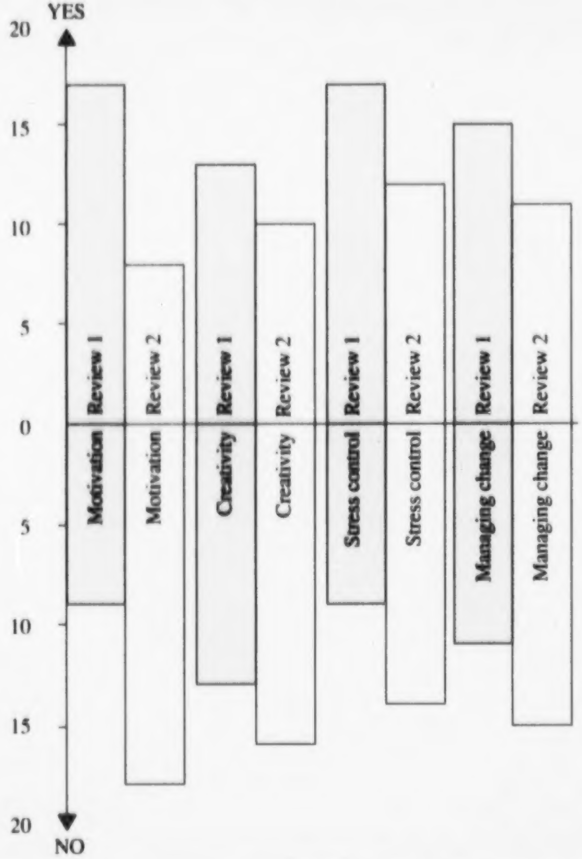
This general observation is congruent with the analysis carried out on the basis of the sample's responses to the first and second review session interview schedule cues regarding their perception of the influence of the log book in specific areas. **Figure 9** provides a visual representation of the numbers of those who expressed a belief at the two review stages that the log book acted as motivator, fostered creativity, helped with stress control and with the management of change. The results are based on 22 out of the 26 change agents and supporters who reported that they were using the log book at the time of the first review and 17 at the second. In each case the number perceiving the log book as a positive influence decreased over the three to four months separating the reviews.

The full text of the individual observations on which this analysis is based is reproduced in Appendix 2. A yes or no in brackets after each comment indicates whether it is perceived as implying a positive log book influence. As, for example, with regard to motivation in the following observations:

> It has increased motivation because it's mostly been used as a de-stressing device. When I look back, reflect and consider ways of improving the situation it motivates. (Yes)

> Keeping the log book hasn't affected my motivation but being part of the change agent process has. The reflection, looking at change as an item, being part of a group with that agenda was useful. The log book was not the sharp end of that. It was more cathartic than motivational. (No)

Figure 9: Perceptions of the role and influence of the log book



The consensus appeared to be that the process of keeping the log, allied to the opportunity for group discussion and for individual review, made a positive contribution but only over a limited, finite period. Six of the sample, however, expressed an intention to continue keeping the log book as the basis for an informal support network.

Several change agents distinguished between benefits derived from the log book activity *per se* and from the opportunity it provided for individual review meetings:

> Going through the log during the review meeting is motivating and supportive.

Others included provisos:

> In another sense if one believed that some of the things discussed might seep through the system through the use of your senior position then it would be motivational. But there would be a long time horizon and one would need to make the connection. (Yes)

There is an overt message here for senior managers to be accessible and prepared to listen, reflect and report back.

The greatest acknowledged log book contribution was to motivation and to stress control (17 out of a sample of 26), followed by managing change (15) and lastly, fostering creativity (13); all at review session 1.

The nature of the contributions acknowledged by the individual change agents and supporters demonstrates the diversity of attitudes, needs and experience within the sample. The originators of the following two contributions (both change agents as against supporters) reveal their different perspectives on responsibility and methodology for initiating change:

> Yes. Writing something down makes you realise you must do something about it. (Yes)

> It only motivates through hope that by writing things down in the log it will be possible, through reporting them, to make things better. (Yes)

A third contribution records the movement from a reactive to a proactive role:

> It's contributed to a change in my attitude; from looking at change academically as a victim of it to looking at the management of change as a change agent, how to effect it. (Yes)

The observations with regard to creativity include subtle and obvious differences in definitions:

> Yes, it's given me ideas. By logging things and getting the pattern of things and reflecting I can come up with possible solutions. (Yes)
>
> Yes I'm sure. Floating ideas on the air feels like a creative process – playing with ideas. (Yes)
>
> No. I give vent to creativity in other areas of my life. (No)
>
> Yes, because creativity is about dialogue, getting things out. It allows me to do that and to go back over it, see what the highlights are, question certain assumptions. The pay off needs to be that people feel energised. (Yes)

There is a greater congruence within the observations on the contribution to stress control. Most emphasise the role of the log in facilitating, distancing, clarifying and objectifying:

> Yes, I've recorded stressful events in detail to diffuse them, to stand back and later to share. (Yes)
>
> Yes, through the process of expression it clarifies and as confusion is a cause of stress it takes one level of stress out. It helps me come to terms with myself and my own views and to decide whether to take it further. (Yes)
>
> It came as a surprise that it's a good way to manage stress. At first it was easy to think negatively and to indulge in ego-defensive thoughts in the entries. Then I used the log book to identify my own strategies and it's been part of a process of reducing stress through developing a more general view of my role in the college. (Yes)

Acknowledged contributions to change management refer to planning both at the micro or tactical, and at the strategic level. In both cases the contribution is through aiding the collection of ideas, reflection and clarification:

> I'm quite conservative, an 'agent for stability', yet it has given me lots of ideas for positive change, for me to be an 'agent of improvement'. I'm using it as a tool at the micro, tactical level. (Yes)
>
> Monitoring individual perceptions, recording the process of activity

> should help in planning and anticipating change. Planning isn't creating an irrevocable framework. (Yes)
>
> I can't say it hasn't contributed through a clarification process but there's obviously a lot more to managing change. There's a danger of thinking that because you've expressed it, others have also. There can be a problem when managers experience a major development of thinking while going through the process of decision-making and then assume others have the same perspective. They haven't. It hits them cold and they feel alienated. (Yes)

The warning included in the last observation is of particular significance within this investigation. Many of the log book quotations which appear within the construct analysis in the following section refer to failures in communication, frustration, and stress due to a misplaced assumption that experiential, conceptual and perceptual frameworks overlap sufficiently within the organisation to allow shortcuts to communication. The message from the log books is that they don't.

CONSTRUCT ELICITING AND ANALYSIS

The blank log book, accompanied by a relatively open agenda for use, was intended to provide a means of collecting minimally contaminated, impressionistic, personal responses to experience. It is recognised however, that cues embedded in the guidance sheet (focus: communication, creativity, supporting change), the review pro-forma (if it helps, code them under the following headings, etc.) and the review interview schedule (influence of logbook activity on motivation, creativity, stress, management of change) will have guided and influenced the responses. Fisher (1988), exploring issues related to validity in self-report instruments, warns that: 'self report data may also reflect the underlying methodology'. He illustrates his warning by referring to a study carried out in 1984 of homesickness in boarding school children. They were provided with a form of log book, a diary for recording daily problems. When the cue 'homesickness' was not provided for endorsement only 18 per cent reported it spontaneously. However, when the term was provided in a later study, over 70 per cent reported the experience.

Within this investigation the constructs elicited from the log books should be regarded with this warning in mind; the change agents are likely to have been influenced by the cues given to report experiences and related feelings and perspectives within the target construct areas. Partly in an attempt to avoid further contamination, the lower levels of constructs were determined after the log books had been studied. It is, however, recognised that the constructs I identified will have been triggered not just by the primary data – the log book entries – but by the interaction of the data with my own experience, acting as conceptual filters. Other contaminating effects referred to by Bailey and Bhagat (1987) and discussed in Chapter 2 may have influenced the data. The construct analysis was conducted in January 1993 after the change agents had participated in two group meetings focused on the log book findings and after both the change agents and supporters had experienced an individual review session. The process of crystallization described by Bailey and Bhagat could have been triggered with the investigation procedures contributing to new levels of awareness, new attitudes and consequently new (directed as against spontaneous) log book entries.

Despite the methodological limitations I believe that the log book provides a significant source of data to enable the change process to be analysed within the interpretative framework championed by Wilson (1992) in the opening quotation for this chapter. The data contain insights arising from the 'perspective of the individual's definition of the situation as he or she interprets it'.

The 21 log books which contained data were collected at the end of December. The three change agents and two supporters whose log books were blank gave the following reasons:

> When there are real problems to deal with, the log book seemed precious. Also, I'm not a diary person.
>
> I've been too busy.
>
> I thought nobody would listen and nothing would happen. I've been too frustrated with the nitty gritty so the log book seemed trivial.
>
> I haven't had enough time to do my work so I haven't thought about the log book.
>
> I don't need to write things down to be creative, I forgot it.

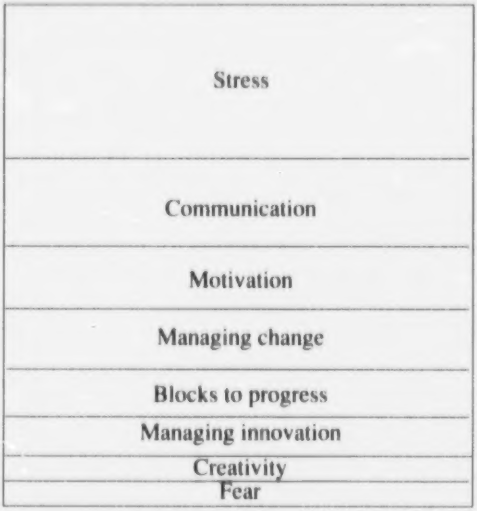
Interestingly, one had at the first review reported limited use of the log book. The five key constructs (stress, communication, motivation, managing change and blocks to progress), already presented to the sample as cues, were written centrally on flip chart paper. Three more were prompted by the data and subsequently added as central concepts – managing innovation, blocks to progress and fear. As the data were read, log by log, the secondary level concepts were pulled out and recorded with accompanying quotations. Finally, the construct sheets were edited at this draft stage by striking quotations out in pencil to eliminate unnecessary repetition and to safeguard anonymity.

The relative frequency of reflections linked to the eight key constructs is represented in **Figure 10**. The figure is designed to convey a general impression only; it was difficult to separate out the managing change from managing innovation and there are many cross references between constructs, particularly those associated with communication and motivation. It is of interest that even though creativity was one of the original cues, this did not trigger many entries. This could be due to confusion over the meaning of the concept, reported above. It should also be viewed alongside the volume of entries related to stress; it might well be, as some change agents suggested, that creativity is suppressed when stress levels are too high. This is borne out in the literature on stress control and burnout reported in Chapter 2. The log book activity encapsulated paradoxes and it is perhaps not too fanciful to speculate on their reverberations within the sample's broad experience of work within the college. On the one hand the log book was valued because it gave permission to take time to reflect, on the other hand it consumed valuable time. The log was a cause of pressure but it also relieved it. Apart from recording events, 11 of the logs included personal analysis and eight included action suggestions. The construct analyses were presented in flip chart form to the sample in two group meetings where they were invited, either within the group or privately outside it, to suggest modifications or omissions if they felt at all uncomfortable with recorded contributions which they recognised as their own or linked to their area of work. No such suggestions were made.

The analyses represent revealing glimpses of what it meant to be working as a change agent in a college over the two terms leading up to incorporation in April 1993. Portions of the analyses are reproduced in Appendix 2.

It would not, perhaps, be appropriate to enter a discussion focused on the detail of the entries within the context of this report. The relevance of the construct analyses relates to the contribution they have made to planning ways forward to organisation development to facilitate effective change. A learning organisation listens to its members; the construct analyses carry significant messages, not just for senior managers but for colleagues at all levels within the college.

Figure 10: Log book analysis: relative frequency of reflections (January 1993)



Number of log books in sample analysed:	21 out of total sample of 26
Within sample analysed, number of change agents:	17
Within sample analysed, number of supporters:	4

LOG BOOK REVIEW PRO-FORMA ANALYSIS

The 26 change agents and supporters, including the five who had not used the log books, responded during the two individual review sessions to the cues on the pro-forma. Their contributions are the basis of the three help and hindrance analyses presented in **Figures 11–13**. Taken with the construct analyses and with other observations recorded during the review sessions (Appendix 2), they provide pointers to ways to improve the effectiveness of communication within the organisation, to increase motivation and to foster creativity. The analyses are useful in providing specific suggestions for development. It is also possible to detect common threads comprising underpinning values such as respect, valuing and trust, underlying processes such as informing, consulting, involving and reflecting and a desire for systems qualities such as openness, accessibility and flexibility. The action plans described and reported in Chapter 9 represent the change agents' and supporters' ideas for addressing the blocks to progress and for building on the strengths and opportunities identified. The log book findings are generally congruent with those reported in the research literature presented in Appendix 5. They are further reinforced by the data collected through the other instruments.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The number of change agents and supporters who reported use of the log reduced from 22 at the first individual review session to 17 at the second.

The number perceiving the log book as a positive influence decreased between reviews.

A half or more of the sample acknowledged that the log book had assisted them positively in stress control, managing change and fostering creativity.

There was a consensus that the process of keeping the log allied to the opportunity for group discussion and for individual review made a positive contribution to supporting individual change agents and the change process generally but only over a limited, finite period of three to four months.

Despite this, almost a quarter of the sample expressed an interest in continuing the log as the basis for an informal support network.

The relative frequency of reflections linked to the key constructs is ranked (high to low) as follows: stress, communication, motivation, managing change, blocks to progress, managing innovation, creativity, fear.

Further specific pointers to improving the effectiveness of communication, to enhancing motivation and fostering creativity were provided through the individual review sessions. The common underpinning values are identified as respect, valuing and trust, involving and reflecting and system's qualities such as openness, accessibility and flexibility.

Figure 11: Log book review: change agents' and supporters' advice on improving communication within the organisation

Communication

What helps?

- Recognising and valuing different experience, visions
- Adequate consultation during decision-making
- Contextual information when decisions communicated
- Being told why a decision has been made
- Appropriate detail, language for audience
- Clear, communicated boundaries re. confidentiality and expectations for dissemination
- In uncertainty, managers admitting when they 'don't know'
- Feeling able to ask for clarification
- Guidance on gatekeepers, systems for getting things done
- Guidance for those responsible for dissemination
- Guidance in meetings on appropriate balance of convergent, divergent phases
- Regular team meetings
- Trust between colleagues in team
- Dedicated time to listen, consult, select appropriate communication medium
- Invitation to give feedback and enabling mechanisms to help do so
- Process of supported envisioning at all levels
- Accessibility of managers linked to a culture of more open management

What hinders?

- Assuming knowledge, understanding and common frames of reference
- Restricted access to decision-making processes
- Delay in feedback, responses to internal queries
- Reliance on formal meetings for dissemination with inadequate monitoring of process and outcomes
- Acronyms, jargon, exclusive esoteric language
- Lack of clarity over responsibilities, particularly for decision-making and dissemination
- Over-reliance on memos as against talking
- Aggressive, curt tone of some memos
- Unavailability of part-time members of staff
- Stereotyping, labelling
- Mixed messages, rumours
- Fear of giving wrong impression
- Bureaucracy hindering speed of response
- Pace of change and pressure of work preventing adequate briefing, explanation

Figure 12: Log book review: change agents' and supporters' advice on increasing motivation within the organisation

Motivation

What helps?

- Sense of direction
- Involvement in planning and decision-making
- Seeing ideas implemented
- Feeling valued, kept informed of intentions
- Recognition, saying thank you, praise
- Positive feedback
- Visible results horizon
- Awareness of goal congruence, shared vision
- Clear role and responsibilities
- Charismatic, strong leadership
- Feeling part of a team
- Finished products, a report, a submission
- Empowerment within clearly communicated parameters
- Visibility of managers
- Supported autonomy
- Living the learning

What hinders?

- Unexplained, unclear expectations
- No acknowledgement of how unsettling people might be finding the changes
- Delays in decision-making
- Perception of favouritism, the 'select few'
- Perceived inequality in workloads, remuneration
- Difficulties in persuading colleagues to meet deadlines, agree priorities
- Sense of following other people's priorities, of not being in charge of own agenda
- Initiative and innovation fatigue
- Feeling that contribution won't be accepted, have any influence; fear of being asked to carry ideas forward unsupported
- Culture of conscripts as against volunteers
- Having to take responsibility for what you have little control over
- Feeling powerless when not consulted, told about things of direct relevance to role
- Demands co-existing with blocks
- Discontinuous activity, mass of apparently unconnected tasks
- Bureaucracy, paperwork delays
- Remoteness and apparent omnipotence of managers

Figure 13: Log book review: change agents' and supporters' advice on fostering creativity within the organisation

Creativity

What helps?	*What hinders?*
Exposure to other ways of seeing	Volume of work
Reflection, standing back and observing	Interruptions
Permission to pause, be still	Insecurity, anxiety and stress
Safe climates to test out ideas	Exhaustion
Critical friends	Felt need for safety, stability
Believing that suggestions will be valued	Perception that no-one will listen
Freedom from unacceptable pressure, stress	Guarded boundaries, controlled territory
Study, research	Unsympathetic 'idea gatekeepers'
Participation in divergent discussion	Apparently inflexible systems

Chapter 5

The Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics

THE INSTRUMENT

The Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics scale was selected on the basis of its potential to provide an indication of the change agent sample's perception of and attitude towards dominant features of the college culture and management style. It was anticipated that subsets within the scale would provide insights into the change agents' preferences with regard to leadership style and communication, decision-making and control processes, and that the potential for links between such preferences and individual and team motivation might be highlighted.

Although the scale was developed specifically for managers from supervisory to senior level, it was felt that the change agents, through their development roles, would be able to identify sufficiently with a managerial perspective to enable them to respond effectively to most of the cues. It was, however, recognised that the majority might not, in a general sense, consider themselves to be managers.

The version of the scale, termed 'Form A' in the literature, was that published by Miller (1991). Miller presents the scale within the context of measures of organisational effectiveness, highlighting what he refers to as a 'commonly accepted assumption [… that …] effective teamwork is related to productivity and morale'. Reference is made in Miller's handbook to Likert's research at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan from which the scale evolved. Likert (1961, 1967) based the scale on a model of four types of management system which he termed:

- System 1 (Exploitive – authoritative);
- System 2 (Benevolent – authoritative);
- System 3 (Consultative); and
- System 4 (Participative group).

Each system was hypothesised to contain its own set of dominant beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. His intention was to demonstrate that as a management culture shifted along the continuum from systems 1 to 4, so productivity would increase, costs would decrease and labour relations would improve.

Almost three decades later it is possible to perceive parallels with claims made by current advocates of total quality systems with their emphasis on team responsibility and autonomy within negotiated organisational frameworks. Within the context of this investigation it is suggested that successful management of change might be related both to effective team work and to the degree of congruity between the visions held by those involved in promoting and supporting the changes as they relate to preferred management culture and that which is perceived to be dominant within the organisation.

The scale was reproduced in a more accessible form with larger typeface and a more generous lay out. The spelling of 'organization' was changed to 'organisation' and the term 'man-to-man' was changed to 'person-to-person' to reflect current attitudes and practice.

It was sent to the 20 change agents in October 1992, by internal mail. The accompanying memo asked for its return within three weeks and stressed confidentiality and anonymity of response. A numbering system was used to enable a second, chase-up memo to be sent to three non-respondents; the list relating names to numbers was duly destroyed once all responses were received.

Guidance on recording, profiling and presentation of responses was obtained from the presentation of research findings in **The human organization** (1967) where Likert displays both the distribution of answers and a comparison of means, based on the administration of an earlier shorter version of the scale.

ISSUES OF VALIDITY

All members of the change agent sample responded to the 1–20 scale with the response rate on individual items ranging from 14 to 19 for 'now', 12 to 18 for 'previously' and 14 to 20 for their preference. One person recently recruited recorded only preference, and the majority of the sample left gaps, either deliberately with explanatory comments or presumably in error when a page, seemingly at random, was not filled in.

During review session 1 each change agent was asked to comment on the scale and to describe his/her approach in completing it. Three areas of concern with respect to validity were identified. The most serious relates to perspective. Fourteen professed to have responded consistently from a perspective they referred to as the 'organisation as a whole', 'top management' or 'house management style'. Six admitted to being inconsistent. Comments written on the scale by the first four items (relating to superiors and subordinates) illustrate the difficulties they experienced.

> I've had problems about what is meant by superiors ... I'll answer *vis-à-vis* my HOD.
>
> These questions feel impossible to answer in the 'now' because it depends where you are in the hierarchy.
>
> Considerable variation depending on which superior and which subordinate.

Three change agents suggested that the shift along the continuum towards System 4 was considerable in pockets of the organisation but that they did not perceive, and therefore had not recorded, the shift overall. One employed the tactic of placing two Ns on the scale in response to 17 of the cues, adding the comment 'in different areas of the organisation'. This was recorded as the average between the two. The implication would seem to be that there is no one dominant culture but rather a multifaceted culture, a point stressed by a member of the elite sample. One change agent observed:

> I realised in doing the Likert what an incredible variance there is in standards of relationships and levels of communication as a feature of the organisation. I had never confronted it in that way before.

The use of the term confront is significant; the apparent lack of a common, shared perception and experience of a whole organisational culture can impede communication, either through an incorrect assumption of shared understanding or through a lack of trust in what become in effect, cross-cultural interactions.

Miller (1991), in summarising Likert's findings (1967), notes that: 'responses to the profile indicate that leadership styles and related organizational characteristics display a remarkably consistent set of interrelationships'. Might one then expect motivation, team co-operation, communication and decision-making to vary in style and effectiveness across the college according to the observed differences in leadership style? There is some evidence from the log books to support this but the sample is not sufficiently large or representative to enable such an hypothesis to be tested on the basis of their experience.

A second concern, with regard to validity, relates to restricted access to levels of management practice. In response to item 18 'Adequacy of upward communication via line organisation', one change agent had written 'How do I know?'. By item 46 (extent to which the review and control functions are concentrated) another had queried 'What is the control function?'.

The third concern is with the language. Three change agents expressed dissatisfaction with the tone and the use of terms such as 'superiors' and 'subordinates' and phrases such as 'subservient attitudes'. One complained, 'I didn't relate to it. I felt it was designed for a non-educational establishment and it referred to management as if there was only one stratum above'.

Others drew attention to ambiguity. Item 12 refers to 'satisfaction'; one change agent wrote on the scale, 'This links satisfaction with the organisation with satisfaction in one's own achievement. These are vastly different things.'

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Despite the evident limitations identified through these concerns, the scale yielded valuable insights into the diversity of perspective within the sample and into the relationship between the sample's perception of the current and previous dominant culture of the organisation and of their preferred culture.

The distribution of 'now' and 'previously' responses span three systems, with the majority under systems 2 and 3. Equivalent diversity covering all four systems but concentrated in System 3, was recorded by Likert (1967) who points to 'a relatively wide range on each item for the answers of middle and upper-level managers in several well-managed companies'.

The Northbrook System 4 'previously' responses are distributed thinly but the 'now' responses are clustered in the 'interaction-influence process' and 'performance goals and training' subsets. The former are responses to cues on the 'amount of co-operative teamwork present' and the 'extent to which subordinates can influence the goals, methods and activity of their units and departments – as seen by superiors'. One should not place too much significance on, respectively, three and six responses but their presence under the participative group system may signify the influence of a current emphasis on team empowerment which is being championed from both top and bottom within a total quality initiative.

The 'performance goals and training' cues refer to the 'level of performance goals which superiors seek to have organisation achieve' and to the 'extent to which you have been given the kind of management training you desire'. The former may again relate to shared responsibility for goal setting and achievement under TQM; the latter reflects the involvement of the change agents sample in extended staff development programmes.

The sample's 'preferred' responses are concentrated under System 4 (participative–group) with a few outriders under System 3 (consultative). The comparison of means indicates a clear preference for a shift towards a more participative organisational culture and a perception of the current dominant culture as benevolent – authoritative (System 2).

Analysis of responses to specific cues within this aggregated picture reveals the potential for frustration and stress to arise from a mismatch between desire, expectation and perceived reality. To focus on the communication process subset: the sample has expressed a preference for the 'direction of information flow to be down, up and with peers' but perceives it currently to be 'mostly downward'. Likewise, the sample's preference on the 'extent to which superiors willingly share information with subordinates' is 'seeks to give subordinates all relevant information and all information they want', their perceived experience is 'gives subordinates only information superior feels they need'. Similar discrepancies, representing tensions, occur throughout the detail of the mean comparisons.

In two areas there is a recorded shift towards System 3 (Consultative) but this shift, although in the preferred direction, has the potential to cause stress and brings, therefore, an accompanying requirement for support. Reference has already been made to these areas – co-operative teamwork, the extent to which subordinates can influence goals and the high goals sought by superiors. Team empowerment places additional responsibility on individual staff to contribute to the meeting of targets; where it is accompanied by an overt striving for high goals there is the potential for high gains but also for high losses. In the needs assessment exercise reported in Chapter 7 change agents identified the need for achievement and for resources among their highest priorities. In the current further education sector context where colleges are required to expand provision while reducing unit costs, it is unlikely that teams will be provided with all the resources they identify as necessary to help them meet the high goals set, both by superiors and by themselves within a TQM culture. The resultant tensions will require a sensitive, proactive response from senior management if motivation is to be sustained.

The results also register an increase in the management training received by the sample. In their case it is evident that support is being provided. The sample is not, however, representative of the staff as a whole, particularly perhaps in their enhanced access to staff development.

In two other subsets there is a recorded shift towards System 1 (Exploitive – authoritative). Item 22 registers a current need for a supplementary upward communication system. Taken with the sample's identified need for 'credibility, receive information and involvement at strategic level' (reported in Chapter 7) this might reflect a frustration at 'not being heard at senior level'. This is reinforced by the second subset which is shown as shifting in this direction – items 25 and 26 (How well does your superior know and understand problems faced by subordinates? And, how accurate are the perceptions by superiors and subordinates of each other?). Here the mean responses record that the 'superior has some knowledge and understanding of problems of subordinates', but that, in response to 'How accurate are the perceptions by superiors and subordinates of each other?' they are 'often in error on some points' and the gap is perceived as widening.

These findings, although accompanied by caveats with regard to the overall validity of the scale, support the need for further development and monitoring of the effectiveness of the communication infrastructure. Since this scale was administered an appraisal system has been established and a commitment has been made to work towards the Investors in People Award. Both developments stress the need for goal congruence, underpinned by efficient and effective communication.

The concern within this investigation is not so much with which style of management is likely to be the most effective *per se*, but with the consequences of a felt mismatch between the expressed needs and expectations of those promoting and supporting change and their experience. The needs identified through the Likert Profile of Organisation Characteristics are reinforced through the needs identification and assessment (Chapter 7), the group occupational stress indicator (Chapter 6), the log book construct analysis (Chapter 4) and through the support programme evaluation (Chapter 8).

The task, not just for the senior management of the college, but for all staff, will be to ensure that such whole college management and development systems that are introduced are implemented sensitively in a manner that will provide support for all those involved in the change process.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The responses for 'now' and 'previously' cluster under System 2 (Benevolent – authoritative) and System 3 (Consultative) and the responses for 'preferred' cluster under System 4 (Participative group). This indicates the change agents' preference for a management culture that values and facilitates open communication systems, consultation and involvement.

A comparison of means for 'now', 'previously' and 'preferred' indicates a shift in the direction of System 4 but in four areas only – co-operative teamwork, the extent to which subordinates can influence goals as seen by superiors, high goals sought by superiors and management training received. There is an attendant shift in the direction of System 1 in the need for a supplementary upward communication system and in the accuracy of the perceptions by superiors and subordinates of each other. This suggests that the change agents have little confidence in the efficacy of the college communication infrastructure and that they are particularly concerned to bridge a perceived gap between staff at different levels of the hierarchy.

Chapter 6

The NFER Occupational Stress Indicator

THE INSTRUMENT

The literature search into organisational change carried out while the research model was being formulated stimulated a quest for an instrument to provide information on the level and forms of stress experienced by the change agent sample. It was anticipated that insights gained through the process of completing, analysing and debating the findings should inform the planning and facilitating of the support programme.

The NFER Occupational Stress Indicator (OSI) was selected for several reasons. It derives from development work undertaken with British organisations; it was first published relatively recently (Cooper, Sloan and Williams 1988) and as it is subject to on-going development, the NFER welcomes feedback from current users. It is described as being designed to be used by anyone in management; the term indicator is intended to signal that the questionnaire should not be regarded as a psychological test but as a guide for management action.

Within the collaborative action research framework it was important to select instruments that would provide an opportunity for the change agent sample to be fully involved in the process, including learning from the data analysis and contributing to action planning arising from it. The OSI provides a management guide, with technical information on the development of the scale, a summary of relevant research into organisational stress and a detailed guide to interpretation.

By sharing this information with the sample it was possible to meet the dual objectives of compiling a group profile representing the change agents' experience of stress and their control strategies, and of enhancing their, or rather 'our' (since I was a member of the sample), ability to plan appropriate organisational action to address the identified needs.

The OSI management guide (Cooper, Sloan and Williams 1988) suggests that such action should be a priority, and claims that the OSI performs a range of functions to aid this process of analysis and treatment, thus providing a structure for future decision-making.

The OSI was therefore selected as an appropriate instrument for the purposes of this investigation. There are, however, some reservations. Despite the inclusion in the guide of a wide ranging, perceptive review of the literature on stress research, the definition of stress on which the OSI is based appears to have its origin in a deficit model which has been criticised by some practitioners in the field. It is represented in the guide as follows:

> Occupational stress is a negatively perceived quality which, as a result of inadequate coping with sources of stress, has negative mental and physical ill health consequences.
> (Cooper, Sloan and Williams 1988)

A second reservation relates to the lack of detailed information currently available with respect to the pilot samples whose scores determined the setting of the average zone limits on the score sheet. Another reservation is expressed in the data supplement (Cooper, Sloan and Williams 1989) where the validity of separate 'broad view' of Type A,' broad view' of control and 'broad view' of job satisfaction scales is questioned. It is suggested that to obtain increased validity total scores should be calculated, combining these scales. This advice was followed.

The OSI is based on a definition of stress which recognises a subjective dimension influenced by personality. The phrase 'Type A behaviour', as used in the OSI guide, describes a set of identified personality characteristics. These are believed to contribute to the stress experienced by an individual.

So long as these reservations are borne in mind when the data are interpreted, the scale has the potential to provide valuable information and insights. The structure is based on four key elements: sources of stress; the individual who may be experiencing stress; coping strategies; and the effects of stress on the individual and the organisation. The latter are identified as low morale, poor job performance, high turnover, high absenteeism and diminished efficiency.

There are seven questionnaires, one of which collects biographical information and six which make up the indicator. It was decided, for reasons of research ethics, not to ask the sample to complete the biographical questionnaire. There was a risk that individuals might have felt pressured to agree, given the group administration format. Some of the questions were felt to be unacceptably intrusive, probing into lifestyle habits with cues such as 'Do you maintain a desired body weight?', 'Do you smoke, if yes, how much per day?' and 'Have you ever felt the need to cut down your drinking?'. In a sample of 20 it would be difficult not to recognise individual questionnaires. While it is accepted that the omission of the biographical questionnaire, albeit an optional element in the OSI, reduces the total amount of information available to aid interpretation, I believe that the sample profile compiled from the biographical data checklist (presented in Chapter 3) provides sufficient contextual information for the purposes of this investigation.

The six indicator questionnaires focus on:

- how you feel about your job;
- how you assess your current state of health;
- the way you behave generally;
- how you interpret events around you;
- sources of pressure in your job;
- how you cope with stress you experience.

These were administered during December 1992 in two separate group meetings, one for the Research and Development Unit and another for the Quality Review and Development Group. Three individuals missed the meetings and the scale was administered to them separately within a week of the meetings. After the sample had completed the OSI they were invited to read and discuss the information presented in the management guide (Cooper, Sloan and Williams 1988). In February 1993, at the next meeting of the two groups, individual scores and group profiles were presented for interpretation and related action planning.

INDIVIDUAL SCORES

Remaining aware of the reservations expressed above, the 20 individual scores on the OSI were entered onto the score sheet and the distribution was analysed and interpreted, following the guidelines presented in the management guide. The score sheet includes a line to represent the average mark and two further lines to indicate the limits of the average zone.

How you feel about your job

The sample's responses to the first questionnaire **How you feel about your job** were as follows:

Satisfaction with achievement, value and growth: This sub-scale is concerned with individual perception of the current scope for advancement and of the extent to which they are valued, as expressed through income and praise of effort. All except one of the change agents' scores were distributed within and below the average zone. There are parallels here with the needs identification and assessment, where achievement was one of the highest assessed mean strengths of need.

Satisfaction with the job itself: This measures satisfaction with managerial work in general. The scores record a spread of responses slightly below the average zone.

Satisfaction with organisational design and structure: Here the scores are generally balanced between the average and below average zones.

Satisfaction with organisational processes: The scores are mainly clustered within the average zone but with several below average. Equivalent dissatisfaction with organisational structure and processes was recorded through the Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics where the change agents favoured a more consultative and group process based style of management than the style they perceived as their current experience.

Satisfaction with personal relationships: Noting that this sub-scale relates to the climate of the organisation, the guide suggests that as managerial work requires a high degree of contact with people, the quality of relationships is relevant. Not all the change agents would accept the label of manager; they do however, need to interact with colleagues in their developmental roles. The majority of the scores fall within the lower band of the average zone. This sub-scale profile contrasts with the one measuring the source of stress related to relationships with other people where the scores differ more significantly from the average, indicating a higher level of stress. It is possible that the change agents, valuing social support (reported below under the coping skills subset) and group processes (recorded through the Likert Profile), are reasonably satisfied with the support they receive through personal relationships while remaining dissatisfied with other interpersonal relationships and are, as a result, in receipt of above average stress.

Broad view of job satisfaction: The scores fall mainly within the lower band of the average zone. However, the 1989 NFER data supplement (**Occupational Stress Indicator: data supplement**, Cooper, Sloan and Williams 1989) suggests that aggregated scores for job satisfaction will yield a more valid base for comparison than the broad view scale. These aggregated scores place the group slightly below average, as represented by the normative data supplied.

To summarise, the balance of the scores on the first questionnaire fall below average. The lowest rate of satisfaction is with achievement, value and growth and organisational design and structure.

How you assess your current state of health

Responses to the second questionnaire **How you assess your current state of health** were as follows:

Part A: How you feel or behave: This section is designed to measure overall mental ill health through a range of different aspects. It is important to note that the aim is 'to give the user an insight into health – not an in-depth clinical diagnosis'. The scores are significantly above average, suggesting the existence of an unacceptable level of stress within the group.

Part B: Your physical health: All items here are related to physical symptoms of stress. Again, the scores are significantly above average, as would be expected in the light of the Part A scores.

The way you behave generally

Responses to the third questionnaire **The way you behave generally** were as follows:

Attitude to living: Here the underlying perspective on life and work is measured including confidence, commitment and dedication. It is related to Type A behaviour, described in the OSI guide as 'an overall style or manner of behaviour that is characterised by excessive time consciousness, abruptness of speech and gesture, competitiveness, etc.'. Sadly, despite the establishment of Type A behaviour as a significant and independent predictor of coronary heart disease and other stress-related illnesses, it tends to be rewarded in the business environment. There are, however, positive aspects to such behaviour such as are represented in the stereotypical view of a change agent as enthusiastic, positive and proactive. The balance of scores, falling in the average and above average zones, indicate that the sample conforms to some extent with this stereotype.

Style of behaviour: This measures the behavioural component of Type A behaviour; the underlying elements are speed and abruptness of behaviour. Again, on balance, the scores fall in the average and above average zones.

Ambition: All except two of the scores are above average, a significant number outside the average zone limits. This is in revealing contrast with one result of the needs assessment scale where advancement was prioritised last. The mean strength of need recorded however, at 2.8, is still in the upper half of the 1 to 4 scale. It may be that individuals, subject to cultural inhibitions, are reluctant to place what could be perceived as a selfish need high on a scale whereas the OSI is able to tease out less guarded responses.

Broad view Type A: Based on factors probed by the preceding three scales the scores are in all but three cases, above the line denoting average on the score sheet.

In summary, the balance of scores on the third questionnaire are all above average. This denotes, within the context of the OSI a preponderance of Type A behaviour. Using the aggregated scores for comparison, the mean change agent sample Type A score is higher than the normative data scores. This again suggests a tendency towards Type A behaviour as measured on the scale. We should not perhaps be surprised by this. The management guide observes that, in the original normative table provided, 'means look surprisingly low for a managerial population where one might expect fairly high levels of the syndrome'.

How you interpret events around you

The fourth questionnaire – **How you interpret events around you** – measures the final aspect of the assessment of the individual.

Organisational forces: The guide refers to the range of invisible influence systems, unspoken and difficult to articulate, within organisations and states that this sub-scale measures the degree to which employees perceive the influence of pressures emanating from this. This description equates to the cultural web of myths, recipes and power networks described by Johnson and Scholes (1993). The scores all fall above the line denoting the average score, with 17 above the average zone. This suggests that the change agents are highly sensitive to the informal power and influence networks within the college. Such an awareness could be considered a core skill for managing change effectively.

Management processes: This measures three key areas in which individuals generally express a need to exert influence: how their performance is appraised; how they get promoted; and who has the power. Again, all the scores are above the line denoting the average score with seven above the average zone. These scores would suggest that the change agents have a strong need for autonomy and influence; this is again borne out by results on the needs assessment scales.

Individual influence: This measures perceived control at the individual level as a function of perceived ability to influence. Here the scores cluster around the average line. It would appear that although the change agents have a strong need to influence they do not have above average expectations of their ability to do so. It is anticipated that the resultant tension could lead to stress.

Broad view of control: All these scores, as one would expect from the related sub-scale scores, are above average, all except one falling outside the average zone. As with the other broad view scales the advice in the 1989 data supplement was followed and aggregated scores were calculated for the control scales. The mean, minimum and maximum scores are all considerably higher than the normative data.

In summary, the sample reveals a strong need to influence and a sensitivity to the informal channels through which they might expect to do so, accompanied by an only average expectancy of the ability to do so on an individual basis. Given that their broad expectation of control is higher than their individual one, it might be that they would have a higher expectation of group influence. This would have implications for strategies to promote, support and generally manage change.

Sources of pressure in your job

The fifth questionnaire is **Sources of pressure in your job.** The sample's responses were as follows:

Factors intrinsic to the job: This measures sources of stress emanating from the fundamental nature of the job itself. The scores are spread broadly within the average zone.

The managerial role: Here individuals' perceptions of the expectations others have of them is measured. Again the majority of the scores cluster within the average zone with an even balance of those above and below.

Relationships with other people: The guide emphasises that most important here are relationships with superiors. All but two of the scores fall above the average line with 11 above the average zone. It would appear that whereas the sample experience slightly below average satisfaction with personal relationships generally (sub-scale 1), relationships with specific individuals, particularly superiors, are a potential source of stress.

Career and achievement: The balance of the scores here represents a marginally above average response, suggesting that the sample might be experiencing stress due to a perceived lack of promotion opportunities.

Organisational structure and climate: As the guide observes, managers are in an interesting position, contributing to as well as experiencing the organisational structure. Climate represents the individuals' perceptions of stress from both structure and process. The change agents, though not all managers, do contribute through their development work to organisational systems and processes. They are also subject to pressures emanating from both. Their scores are spread around the average zone but, on balance, represent an above average group response.

Home/work interface: The guide refers to a two-way relationship with sources of stress at work affecting home life and vice versa. The scores here were more widely distributed than on any of the other subscales, ranging from below 10 to above 50. Overall, the balance is above average.

In summary, the main sources of pressure for the change agent sample measured above average on the OSI are relationships with other people, career and achievement, organisational structure and climate and the home/work interface. Average levels of pressure are recorded for factors intrinsic to the job itself and the managerial role. It would appear that the organisational and home context is more likely to give rise to stressors than the change agents' role and activities. One cannot, however, attach too much significance to this, as in practice the factors are interrelated and to isolate them in this fashion is artificial and potentially misleading.

How you cope with stress you experience

The sixth questionnaire – **How you cope with stress you experience** – comprises 28 possible sources of coping with stress.

Social support: Within the guide it is recognised that relying on others as support can take various forms and that 'the mere existence of supportive relationships will itself be significant'. The scores indicate that the sample relies to a higher extent than average on such social support.

Task strategies: Task strategies are defined as ranging from the micro organisation of tasks to reliance upon broad organisational processes. The scores on this sub-scale are even higher than for social support; all except five are above the average zone. The sample appears to be adept at devising its own systems and making use of existing ones to help cope with pressure. This would seem to be an appropriate, valuable competence for those involved in managing change. What cannot be measured by the OSI is the extent to which those who already have these skills became change agents as against acquiring the skills once they had adopted the role, possibly even as a result of doing so.

Logic: The intention of this sub-scale is to measure the extent to which individuals cope with stress through trying to be objective, possibly suppressing feelings and through adopting an 'unemotional and rational approach'. The sample's scores for this fall, on balance, just below average, although three scores are positioned above the average zone. It is possible that the committed, dedicated approach suggested by the scores on attitude to living sub-scale entails an emotional investment which precludes the unemotional approach referred to in the guide.

Home and work relationships: These relationships are seen as possessing dual roles, causing pressure and providing a source of coping strategies. The scores are balanced around the average zone with a minority falling above and below.

Time: The scores are, on balance, above average suggesting perhaps that the sample is aware of the significance of time management as a coping strategy and believes it has developed a level of expertise.

Involvement: This is regarded as a difficult characteristic to label because it entails diverse items. The underlying theme is said to be the process of the individuals submerging or committing themselves to the situation and thereby coping by forcing themselves to come to terms with 'reality'. All the scores are above the average line and 15 were above the average zone. This might be expected of a group of committed change agents, all of whom expressed an intention to work towards an identified area of change, perceived as positive.

In summary, the sample recorded above average employment of the following coping strategies: social support, task strategies, time management and involvement; and average employment of logic, and home and work relationships.

GROUP PROFILE

The group profile summarises the aggregated sample's scores on each sub-scale. It was compiled following the advice given in the management guide. Judgement is involved, particularly where the individual scores are distributed in such a way as to be borderline between the three above/average/below categories.

Emphasising that an holistic view of the sources of pressure should be adopted, the guide suggests that attention should be focused on boosting aspects of coping on which the group appears to reflect low scores. There were no low scores for coping strategies although this should not be viewed with complacency. Individual scores within the sample reflect a need for support in developing certain coping skills further.

A significant dimension to these findings is the manner in which they reflect and reinforce findings emanating from the log book construct analysis, the needs assessment and the Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics. Chapter 9 presents the change agent's evaluation both of the support programme which was designed to meet identified group needs, and of the other means for support and for coping with stress which individuals described as their preferred strategies.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Questionnaire 1 **How you feel about your job**: the scores indicate that the change agents are experiencing below average satisfaction, the lowest rates being with achievement, value and growth, and organisational design and structure.

Questionnaire 2 **How you assess your current state of health**: the scores reveal an above average tendency towards both mental and physical ill health.

Questionnaire 3 **The way you behave generally**: the scores are above average, denoting a preponderance of Type A personality within the sample.

Questionnaire 4 **How you interpret events around you**: the balance of scores is above average, with the exception of individual influence where the scores are average. This reveals a strong need to influence and a sensitivity to the existence of informal channels.

Questionnaire 5 **Sources of pressure in your job**: the scores indicate that the main sources of pressure for the change agent, scored above average, are relationships with other people, career and achievement, organisational structure and climate, and home/work interface.

Questionnaire 6 **How you cope with stress you experience**: the scores indicate that the change agents employ the following strategies to an extent which is above average: social support, task strategies, time management and involvement.

Chapter 7

Change agents' needs identification

THE INSTRUMENTS

Research into motivation and occupational stress has posited links between the satisfaction of felt 'needs' and effectiveness of performance. The literature on the management of change and, in particular, on the role and influence of the change agent suggests that those acting in this capacity are likely to share a similar range of needs.

With a view to providing immediate support through an intervention programme and to inform the longer term process of organisational development to support change, I constructed a scale to identify and assess the expressed needs of the individual change agents. The change agents' needs assessment scale was adapted from a schema developed by Wilder and Plutchik (1982) to reduce stress and prevent burnout through a process of needs diagnosis. Wilder and Plutchik identified two categories of need, one which they felt was more closely related to personality characteristics and one to job characteristics. From the list given, five were selected from the former category – *recognition, achievement, competence, autonomy,* and *advancement* and three from the latter list – *variety and change, participation in decisions,* and *interpersonal relations.* Two more were added as a result of debate within the Research and Development Unit – *credibility* and *goal congruence.*

The final list of 10 needs was as follows:

- achievement;
- advancement;
- autonomy;
- competence;
- credibility;
- goal congruence;
- interpersonal relations;
- participation in decisions;
- recognition; and
- variety and change.

A pilot study was conducted with six individuals outside the change agent sample. The scale ranking procedure operated effectively but clarification was requested with regard to the meanings of the terms used to represent the needs. This was subsequently addressed through the compilation of a list of definitions. This included one definition used by Wilder and Plutchik for autonomy: 'the need to be able to make decisions about my work on my own' and an amended version of their definition for interpersonal relations substituting 'colleagues' for 'superiors, peers and subordinates'.

The list of 10 needs, with accompanying definitions, was presented to the change agents during the first review session. They were asked to indicate the perceived strength of each need for them, personally, by circling the appropriate scale number (from 1 – low to 4 – high). They were next asked to circle the appropriate number to represent the extent to which they felt each need was being met for them at work. Finally they were encouraged to identify further needs and to add them to the scale, supplying definitions.

Between five and six months later, during the second review session, they were asked to indicate, through the same procedure, any change in the strength of their needs since the first review session and the extent to which each need was then felt to be met at work.

A second scale of change agents' identified needs assessment was compiled from the 16 additional needs added to the scale by individuals during the first review session. This was presented to the sample during the second review session, with the definitions as written by the individual change agents. They were asked to follow the same procedure as for the original scale, indicating the personal strength of each need and the extent to which it was being met at work. The two scales were completed in this fashion by all members of the change agents sample. The 16 additional needs added by individuals were as follows:

- personal development;
- incentives;
- support;
- use of expertise;
- power;
- clarity of goals;
- influence;
- academic stimulus;
- resources;
- receive information;
- congruence: responsibility and accountability;
- clear expectations;
- share perceptions of potential change;
- involvement at strategic level;
- pleasure and fun; and
- cerebral support.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The scales were designed to yield an impression of the sample's current needs as a guide for immediate intervention and longer term strategic organisational change. They were not subjected to rigorous analysis with regard to reliability nor validity. They provide an indication of the respondents' subjective judgement at the time of administration; for this purpose it would not have been appropriate to attempt to measure test-retest reliability. With regard to validity, the original change agents' needs assessment scale is based on research into occupational stress and burnout carried out by Wilder and Plutchik (1982); it is believed that this scale has higher content validity, in the sense of a representational set of items providing a balanced coverage, than the second scale (change agents' identified needs assessment) which was compiled from the unmodified contributions of 12 of the individual change agents. These include a higher level of overlapping concepts. Within the framework of action research this is considered acceptable; the sample requested the opportunity to respond to the needs identified by their colleagues.

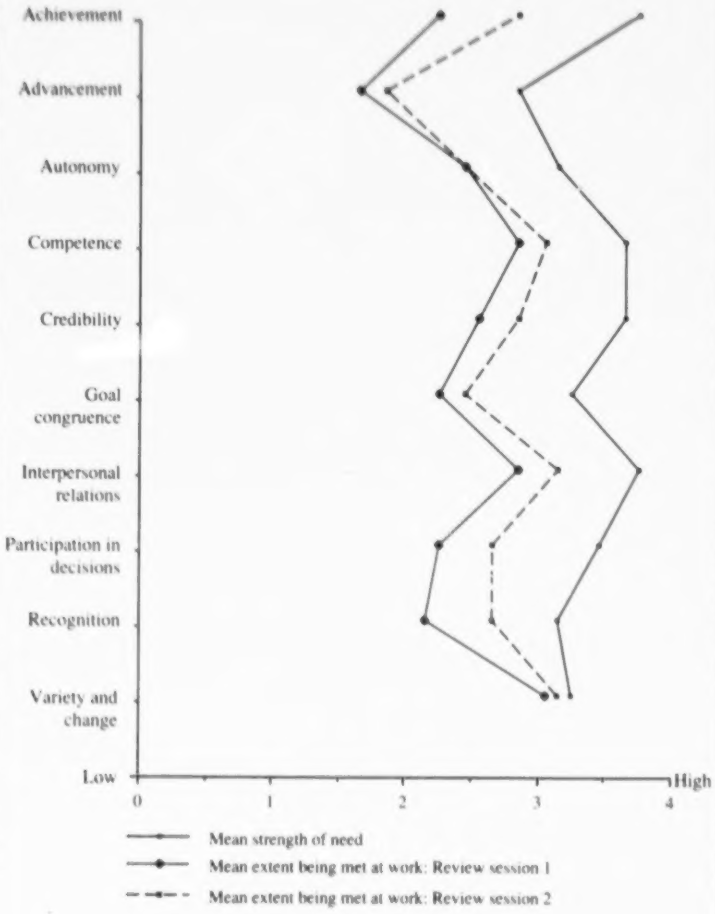
The status of the scale as described, taken with the limited sample size, restricts the extent to which statistical procedures such as correlation or factor analysis can legitimately, or even sensibly, be applied to the data. An indication of the relative balance and strength of needs and of the extent to which they were perceived as being met at work, as sampled at two stages, five to six months apart, was obtained through plotting raw scores and calculating means.

With respect to the change agents' needs assessment scale, **Figure 14** displays the rank mean strengths of need, accompanied by the mean scores representing the extent to which the needs are perceived as being met at work at the time of reviews sessions 1 and 2. An original intention to compare the strength of need at review sessions 1 and 2 was abandoned when only six of the sample recorded a change and only with regard to between one and three needs. One sample member added arrows to indicate the direction of potential movement but this was ignored in the analysis. Where another circled two numbers the higher number was recorded. The mean strengths of need are all positioned in the upper half of the scale, ranging between 2.8 and 3.7 with all except one (advancement) ranked above 3. In each case and on both occasions measured, there is a gap between the mean scores for strength of need and those for the extent to which the needs are being met at work. In all but one case (autonomy) there is a movement between reviews towards meeting the needs. The average increase in the extent the needs are perceived as being met, between review sessions 1 and 2 is 0.28; the largest increase (0.6) is in meeting the need ranked highest, achievement and the second recognition, ranked joint eighth. This is followed by a 0.4 increase in meeting the need participation in decisions.

Care should be taken in the interpretation of this finding. The overall improvement in the perceived meeting of needs could be due to the operation of the Hawthorne effect where the change agents are in receipt of increased attention. As one change agent observed during the second review session, reflecting on whether the project had a positive effect on motivation:

> Yes, because I've really reflected on the positive. It's made me more aware of what's worked well. Also, the whole project, not just the log book, has clearly drawn us together as change agents and supporters. The common identity gives us permission to work together. It's motivating. Now when we reflect verbally instead of feeling it's indulgent we see it as essential to communication. We've been given permission to do so.

Figure 14: Change agents' needs assessment (review sessions 1 and 2) n=20



This could certainly account for the increase in recognition, and possibly credibility where the feedback from the log book review sessions, and support programme events such as the Research and Development Unit seminars aimed to celebrate the contribution of individual change agents. It may also, however, be a valid indication of the effect, over five to six months, of such whole college developments as the total quality initiative together with moves towards course team empowerment. Here, again, we must exercise caution; the sample, drawn from staff already active in whole college developments, is not representative of the staff as a whole.

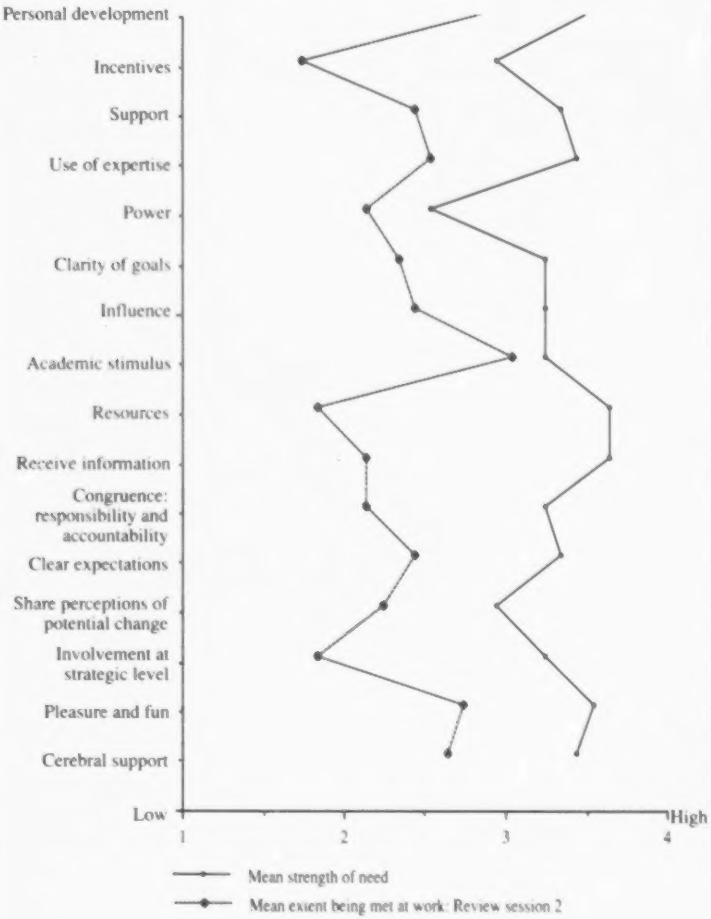
The highest ranked mean strengths of need are achievement and interpersonal relations. There is an interesting parallel here with the change agents group Occupational Stress Indicator profile (Chapter 6), where the group scored above average on relationships with other people and career and achievement in the category sources of pressure in your job. Given that a change agent, by definition, is required to seek to influence colleagues, both peers and superiors, it is important to recognise that interpersonal relations are likely to be both a source of support and of stress. The challenge for management is to facilitate systems that increase the potential for the former and reduce the potential for the latter.

The rank of achievement (joint highest – 3.7 mean) can be contrasted with that of advancement, ranked lowest (2.8 mean). Within the context of the log book construct analysis and the review session interview record, achievement can be interpreted as linked to what Maslow (1943) has termed self-actualisation. The definitions that accompanied the scale endorse this, describing achievement as 'the need to obtain what I perceive as successful outcomes' and advancement as 'the need to see potential progression to a higher grade/status/ remuneration'. As has been noted in Chapter 6 however, with respect to the latter, on the NFER OSI the sample registered slightly more than average stress with regard to career and achievement, which includes career prospects.

It is also interesting that the closest relationship between the three means is for variety and change (strength of need 3.2, extent met at work 3.00 review 1, and 3.1 review 2). This could be taken to offer tentative support for the widely expressed assumption that those who are most successful in managing change are likely to be those who not only accept but welcome and promote change.

The mean scores for the second scale – change agents' identified needs assessment – are presented in graphical form in **Figure 15**. Three members of the sample felt unable to respond to one of the needs identified in the scale. A nil

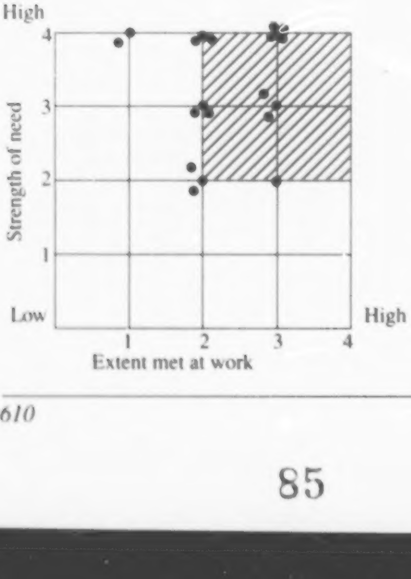
Figure 15: Change agents' identified needs assessment (review session 2) n=20



response was recorded and for these needs (support, power and clear expectations), a sample size of 19 is applied in calculating the mean. In one case an arrow was added to show the direction of potential movement within the scale; this was ignored. On one script the circle was placed on two occasions between numbers and on another script two numbers were circled on three occasions. In each case the higher number was recorded.

As with the first scale, all the mean strengths of need were ranked in the upper half of the scale, ranging between 2.5 and 3.6, three out of 16 being ranked above 3. As with the first scale there is a gap between the mean scores and the extent to which they are perceived as being met at work. The overall relationship between the means differs from scale 1 in that the profile is less consistent with regard to the relationship between the means associated with each need. For one need (academic stimulus) the gap is only 0.2 whereas for resources and receive information it widens to 1.8 and 1.5 respectively. Given that the latter two needs have the joint highest means for strength (3.6), this gap signals a concern within the sample. It is perhaps to be expected that implicit within the needs which are identified will be a shortfall in perceived satisfaction; such a gap, however, in a narrow 1 to 4 scale, is likely to warrant further investigation followed by remedial action. Within this investigation, the need for more effective communication, incorporating information dissemination is a recurrent theme.

There is a need for caution, however, in attributing too much significance to the interpretation of mean scores (which are shown in **Figures 14** and **15**). The mean scores diguise the fact that individual scores varied, sometimes widely. If the scores for each need are plotted on a scattergraph, the strength of the need and the extent to which it is being met at work can be visualised (see example – in this case the need is 'clear expectations'). The quadrant with the highest frequency can be shaded (in this case, high need/ high met).



For the first scale the high need/ high met quadrant is shaded for achievement, competence, credibility, goal congruence, interpersonal relations and variety and change. There is a balance in distribution between the high need/low met and the high need/high met quadrants for autonomy, advancement, participation in decisions, and recognition and in the case of advancement six scores appear in the low need/low met and low need/high met quadrant. This would indicate that although, on balance, the change agents sample reported a relatively high need and moderate level of satisfaction in the extent to which needs for autonomy, participation in decisions and recognition were met (ranging from 3.4 to 3.1 strength of need and 2.6 to 2.4 extent met at review 2), there is diversity of response within the sample. There is the greatest variance in strength of need and perception of the extent to which it is met with regard to advancement with two change agents having their felt need exceeded. Within the context of organisational development it would seem appropriate to address individual as well as group needs.

For the second scale the high need/high met quadrant is shaded for personal development, support, use of expertise, power, clarity of goals, influence, academic stimulus, clear expectations, shared perception of potential change, pleasure and fun, and cerebral support. There is a balance in distribution between the high need/low met and the high need/high met quadrant for resources, receive information and congruence: responsibility and accountability. For involvement at strategic level and for incentives the high need/low met quadrant is shaded.

The latter result is not perhaps surprising; the change agent sample includes only two members of the strategic (senior) management team, the two directors and only three heads of department. The rest have roles that do not generally involve them in strategic decision-making. There is, however, a clear indication of a felt need to be so involved. It is perhaps worth considering whether staff at all levels in the organisation could contribute more to debates on strategic issues and whether appropriate and adequate channels exist within the organisation to enable their voices to be heard.

The position of receive information in the set where responses range over the high need/high met and high need/low met quadrants is a concern. The mean strength of this need ranks joint highest at 3.6 with resources which also has responses ranged over the two high need quadrants. Whereas it might be accepted that felt need would frequently exceed satisfaction with regard to resources, an organisation seeking to manage change effectively cannot afford to be complacent with regard to information access and reception. This result reinforces the organisational need identified through the log book analysis (Chapter 4); that is the need to address the perceived shortfall in communication flow within the college.

The needs which comprise scale 2 were identified by the sample. As one wrote on the scale comparing it to the first scale, 'These are needs and interests I feel I have more in common with'. Although there are weaknesses in the scale, such as overlapping categories, there is a directness of voice and an increase in validity for the specific sample and, perhaps, the college at the time of the survey.

Five of the 16 identified needs are related to a felt need for clarity – of goals, expectations, perceptions of change, congruence between responsibility and accountability, and information. Five more relate to other forms of support – resources, personal development, cerebral, academic stimulation and support in general. If pleasure and fun can be interpreted as a support then there are six in this category. The remaining five relate to the need to feel valued and to make a contribution – use of expertise, influence, involvement at strategic level, incentives, power.

The needs presented in scale 1 also relate to these three broad areas. Clarity underpins goal congruence, support underpins interpersonal relations, and the need to feel valued and to make a contribution underpins achievement, competence, credibility, participation in decisions, recognition and advancement. The remaining two (autonomy and variety and change) also have some affinity with this last group.

Individual needs in these areas can be addressed through local intervention; a more effective way forward would be through holistic frameworks such as management development, staff appraisal and quality systems.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

The mean strengths of all the needs assessed on both scales are positioned in the upper half of the 1–4 scale suggesting a common base of strongly felt needs.

In each case the change agents report a gap between their strengths and the extent to which these needs are met at work. This gap narrows for those needs that were assessed at both review sessions 1 and 2 except for one need, autonomy, where the gap is unchanged. It may be that the Hawthorne effect was in operation and that the change agents felt their needs were being addressed at least in part as they participated in the action research and enjoyed the enhanced opportunities for support.

The highest needs recorded were for achievement, interpersonal relations, competence, credibility, receive information, resources, personal development, and pleasure and fun.

At the second review the greatest gaps recorded between needs and the extent to which the change agents believed they were being met were for resources, involvement at strategic level, receive information, incentives, and congruence between responsibility and accountability.

The need profiles indicate a diversity in response within the sample, particularly with regard to the extent to which the following needs are perceived to be met at work: autonomy, advancement, participation in decisions, recognition, incentives, resources, receive information, and congruence between responsibility and accountability.

Chapter 8

Voluntary support programme evaluation

THE INSTRUMENT

The concept of a formally organised and facilitated group support programme was introduced to the change agent sample in the Research and Development Unit and Quality Review and Development Group meetings held in July 1992 where an initial, tentative menu of activities was discussed, amended and extended. It was decided additionally to invite the supporters' sample to those activities focused on stress control. Agreement was reached that with the exception of attendance at the group log book review meetings, participation should be voluntary.

The sample was asked to use a pro-forma to maintain an evaluative record of their participation, not just in activities facilitated through the formal programme but in more spontaneous happenings within the change agents network. Feedback was obtained during the individual and group review meetings held in December 1992 and March 1993. Data acquired through this process were combined with data emanating from the log book construct analysis and review (presented in Chapter 4) to form the basis of a model of change agents' preferred support routes linked to models of their perceived stressors and of their preferred stress management strategies.

THE FOCUS

Research into the management of organisational change (reported in Chapter 2) posits links between self-esteem, performance and stress. While all staff within an organisation undergoing change might be expected to experience stress and to require support, this investigation focuses on the needs of a sample drawn from those involved in promoting change, the change agents. The support programme was planned as a formal intervention, the effectiveness of which was to be evaluated by those involved; the lessons learned were to contribute to the planning of an increasing raft of support for staff across the organisation.

Within the literature on stress research there is a body which emphasises the risks of burnout, particularly where committed, enthusiastic staff are working within such caring service professions as education. Insights available from research into support programmes to prevent or ameliorate the effects of burnout are felt to be relevant to this investigation. Paine (1982) compares four levels or sites for intervention for the prevention, mediation or remediation of job stress burnout, the personal individual, interpersonal, immediate work environment and organisational. A recurring message within the anthology of research writings edited by Paine is that individual change unaccompanied by organisational change is likely to be ineffective in the long-term and may even be counter-productive, where frustration follows stimulated but unmet expectations.

There is an echo of this in the cautious response of one change agent during the second individual review session to the cue to discuss the influence of the support programme on attitudes to change, to motivation and to perception of stress:

> I'm not sure. Initially there was goodwill and interest but there haven't been any tangible results yet, so there's a risk of demotivation.

During the course of this investigation data collected through the log books and through the other instruments prompted a shift in emphasis away from individual interventionist support towards systemic organisational development. It is, however, believed that there remains an accompanying need for individual support. As Paine (1982) asserts, ideally, supported changes should occur at all levels; the need is for:

> Intervention programmes that focus on identification, prevention, and human resource management rather than on mediation and remediation alone.
> (Paine 1982)

Exploring the link between these levels, in the same anthology Edelwich and Brodsky (1982) offer advice on training interventions in the workplace and warn that:

> Training interventions mean little unless the principles enunciated are given sustained implementation.
> (Edelwich and Brodsky 1982)

They emphasise that 'management should seek to create a supportive on-the-job atmosphere' but that the intervention workshop format can be used to supplement 'sound on-going management'. The action plans written by the change agents represent pointers to specific developments within an holistic framework to support such organisational development.

The decision to place an initial focus within this investigation on support for the change agents is consonant with a further recommendation from Edelwich and Brodsky that support should be directed, not at the apathetic but 'at those who are engaged (with varying degrees of enthusiasm, stagnation and frustration) in coping with the dynamics of expectations and limitations'. This is to 'establish constructive habits of discussion and mutual support within the organisation'.

THE FORMAL PROGRAMME

An embryo programme was presented to the change agents in July 1992. Four ideas were included: a stress management workshop; a peer support group with external facilitator; a stress reduction/relaxation tape loan; and the creation of a 'quiet space' for reflection, meditation and rest. These were welcomed but it was observed by the external consultant that there was no provision for what could be termed cerebral support. After discussion it was agreed to add what later became known as a management of change forum, a series of seminars focused on models of change management with an emphasis on the role, alternative styles and tactics of change agents. An information and sharing network was also added. The process of keeping and reviewing the log book was accepted as an integral part of the formal support programme. At the October review meetings a seminar on ethics and values was added to the programme, to be led by a team from the University of Central Lancashire. The second review session record scripts (Appendix 3) reveal that 15 out of the 20 change agents participated in the formal programme with the remaining five attending only the log book review meetings. Four of the six supporters participated in the stress workshops.

The stress management workshop was held in December 1992. Eight change agents and four supporters participated. All except one of the 12 reported beneficial effects and found the day helpful. However, reservations were expressed in the support programme evaluation records about long-term benefits:

> It was useful and thought provoking. However, a few months on I seem to have forgotten what we learned and I am not sure whether it has helped me cope with stress.
>
> It's good to establish reference points, common ground, but in retrospect I've been unable to fulfil most of the good ideas.

This concern finds expression in the literature on stress management. Beehr and O'Hara (1987), assessing the benefits of stress treatments such as workshops, report that 'to be worthwhile the programme needs to have an impact beyond, otherwise the cost-benefit ratio is very poor'. Related to this they observe that many of the treatments reviewed in their literature search were intended to become self-administered and to continue in the long-term. Two of the sample reported that they would continue to make conscious, active use of what they had learned. One referred to a development in support through interpersonal contact:

> Very useful, not immediately but I notice a big change now in the depth of contact I am able to have with more people.

Another had adopted a more proactive stance:

> It was timely and supportive in persuading me to recognise that I have responsibility to manage my own stress.

There was a request for a second workshop but it was decided to defer this until a repeat of the first workshop had been held for a number of staff outside the sample, who had expressed some resentment at what they perceived as unequal opportunities linked to unfair privileged access. The support programme stimulated the articulation of developing hostility amongst some staff who regarded those involved in the research as a favoured clique. These feelings were detected by the sample who reported it in their log books and in review sessions. One log entry encapsulates the dual influence of the intervention, increasing trust within the group and reducing it outside:

> Clearly X's intentional interventions and purposeful gathering together of a specific group has had a marked effect on the mutual trust of those within it (although possibly sparking mistrust by those outside it).

An individual review session observation reinforces the warning:

> Yes, the fact that the college is organising things to do with stress management makes me feel supported but there are undercurrents; some people see us as a clique of insiders.

As credibility with their peers was highlighted as a felt need by the change agents in the review meetings it was decided to address this situation promptly. The early organisation of a repeat stress workshop to widen access was an attempt at bridge building as well as a planned stage in the intentional widening of the support raft within the college. Strategies for widening participation and reducing mistrust outside the sample were focus cues for the second individual review session. Responses are reported in Chapter 9.

An invitation to join the proposed peer support group was circulated amongst the change agents and supporters in October 1992. The title was changed to action learning group and prospective members were told that an external facilitator would 'help set up and maintain the structure' involved in the approach. The invitation established that:

> Each member of the group will have the opportunity to explore work-related problems in a structured and supportive setting. Other members of the group listen, express support, make suggestions and pose questions. The aim is to lead the person to question her or himself in ways that they may not have considered and to help the person to decide what action she or he might take.

Although the idea had been welcomed at its introduction three months before, only one person responded positively to the invitation and so the group was not formed. The scheduling of meetings from 2.30 to 5.30 on a particular afternoon had excluded those who were timetabled to teach then, while others had been put off by the requested commitment to attend for a minimum of six months. The potential mix of roles and levels of seniority within the group may have seemed threatening to some. Others in the review sessions had already expressed a dislike of team events:

> Some people enjoy belonging to groups and going to meetings. I hate it. I'm not a team player, not a joiner.

The quiet room is yet to be established. Pressure on accommodation prevented the exclusive allocation of what would in effect be an additional, specialist, staff room. The idea is still supported however, and will be put forward for implementation as part of the on-going accommodation review process.

Three seminars on the management of change led by the lecturer in research methodology from the University of Sussex were organised by the RDU and incorporated in the October, December and February meetings. All except one participant, who described the meetings as a whole as 'mostly unhelpful', valued the seminars. Two observations included on the support record were particularly enthusiastic:

> I'm only just beginning to realise that intellectual discussion is supportive, has a relevance; generally my approach is practical.

> Cerebral support is a tremendous factor in influencing how well I'm coping personally with things; it depersonalises the situation.

Access to the seminar led by a team from the Ethics and Values Research Unit at the University of Central Lancashire was widened by asking each change agent to put forward a colleague's name for invitation; 13 change agents were amongst the 19 who participated. Issues raised with regard to value conflicts and dilemmas and professional ethics were perceived as directly relevant to the management of change. During a group evaluation session the change agents reported that they had found the discussion supportive in that it stimulated ideas for organisational development and, through the case studies presented, reinforced their belief that they were not alone in experiencing stress from role conflict and dissonance when confronted with ethical dilemmas. They did not, however, recommend that an ethics and values audit be conducted at that stage within the college. The work of the University of Central Lancashire is described in Chapter 9 and the action plans include suggestions stimulated by the seminar.

The log book process is evaluated in Chapter 4. Six change agents mentioned it specifically in their support programme evaluation. Its value was reported as a means to share either with colleagues as a coping strategy:

> The log book gives me the opportunity to share what is stressing me with 'critical friends', to distance myself and work out strategies.

Or with senior management as a means to influence change:

> It has helped me feel I can influence the way things are managed.

Six of the sample expressed an interest in continuing to keep a log with a view to meeting occasionally to share insights.

THE SUPPORT NETWORK

The support programme evaluation record was also used to record events and processes outside the formal programme which individuals found supportive. These responses have been grouped under the following headings: relationship with colleagues; team meetings; management processes; environment; teaching and management development courses; personal development courses; and outside college. The support programme record scripts are included in Appendix 3.

In view of the intention to use data from the change agent sample's evaluation of their experience to inform the process of planning a wider base of support, the most significant finding here relates to the contrasting needs of individuals. Whereas the majority, under relationship with colleagues, reported an appreciation of such support:

> I feel immensely privileged to work with such a strongly supportive group of people.
>
> A phone call showed interest in my progress, left me feeling good.
>
> We matter to each other.

One professed not to value it:

> I'm not one to need people to support me.

When a colleague arranged for bunches of daffodils to be distributed throughout the college early one morning to signal the start of a week of staff and student activities focused on mind and body health issues, two change agents felt prompted to note opposing reflections on their evaluation records:

> The idea of putting daffodils around the college is not very real. Money should be spent on priorities. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, daffodils come fairly near the bottom.
>
> I thought the daffodils were a lovely idea – really motivating after the long winter; it felt good that somebody had taken that trouble.

A day's workshop in a hotel led to similarly mixed reactions:

> On the one hand I applaud the motives in organising this but I feel it's almost immoral for us to spend money mollycoddling ourselves when colleagues are having to cope with such limited resources!
>
> I feel a sense of unease. I have reservations re value for money when meetings/courses are held off-site.
>
> Very helpful – this could have been because we were away from college and in lovely surroundings.

In response to the individual review session cue 'Has your participation in this programme affected your attitude towards change, motivation, perception of stress? If so, in what way?' of the 12 who responded in review session 1, 11 reported a positive change and of the 13 who responded in review session 2, 11 did so. Reported changes included greater self awareness:

> Yes I've recognised that cerebral support can be as participative as other support and also that support isn't something people have to do for you, you can do it for yourself.

And awareness of increased influence:

> Yes – it's been most useful. At last I feel connected into the system so I feel I can influence it.
>
> Working with 'change agents' who have access to different committees has helped me to network and create a wider cross-college base.

A number reported an almost reluctant acknowledgement of benefits gained through, at the time, unwelcome effort:

> It's been motivating even when it's also a pressure.
>
> It has helped me break down the compartments I create as a defence mechanism. The events have helped in an holistic way to give me a wider picture of organisational processes and individual activities although at the time they might have felt like an imposition.

Most of those who did not participate in the formal programme, recording only an evaluation of their personal support needs, nevertheless valued the programme, observing that knowledge of its existence was a positive influence:

> Yes, any research which looks at the origins of stress and ways of managing it is valuable. It's motivating to know it's happening.
>
> Unquestionably, the fact that a programme exists which acknowledges the presence of stress and addresses it is supportive regardless of its success or otherwise.
>
> Yes I have found it helpful being part of the project. Without it I would be like an oil rig suspended and not fixed to the sea bed.

Some were concerned over exclusivity:

> I don't know but I feel we ought to be doing something like this. It might seem exclusive, there are others who are also change agents but they've not been involved.

One appeared to have discovered stress through the process of increased awareness through reflection:

> Not really so far, it's made me think I might be stressed when it hadn't occurred to me.

A SUPPORT MODEL

Evidence from the support programme evaluation, the log book construct analysis and review session interviews and from the NFER Occupational Stress Indicator, Likert scales and change agents' needs identification was explored with the change agent sample and informed the process of planning further support.

Rather than a continuation of the original intention to organise further personal support intervention, the focus shifted to support for whole college systems such as management development, appraisal and quality assurance. Although the support programme was held in the main to have been valuable, the log books and processes such as the needs identification and assessment emphasised needs like information, supervision and achievement which would be addressed only through systemic organisational change. **Figures 11, 12 and 13** (Chapter 4) provide a schematic view of the change agents' perception of what helps and hinders communication, motivation and creativity. With the exception of creativity where some of the needs expressed (for example safe climate to test out ideas, study, research, critical friends) continue to be met through the formal programme of RDU meetings, the needs embedded in the schema such as clear roles and responsibilities and invitation to give feedback and enabling mechanisms to help do so can be met only through organisational development.

To help inform this process a model of the stressors perceived by the change agents and supporters and of the way they sought to manage the stress and of their preferred support routes, was compiled from the support programme evaluation record and from the log book construct analysis and review record. These are presented in **Figures 16, 17** and **18**.

Beehr and O'Hara (1987) observing, in common with most other writers on stress research, that the concept of stress is used inconsistently in the literature, define stressor as 'an environmental characteristic or event thought to produce an adverse reaction in the person – either psychological or physiological'. With regard to construct validity they warn that the link between higher order constructs such as stressor and operational variables, such as those presented in the model here, should be treated with caution. This is accepted.

The models are impressionistic and do not claim to possess validity beyond the scope of the investigation. They owe their origin to the kind of subject-centred or collaborative model of stress research recommended by Shipley and Orlans (1988) where, in their words:

> The onus is on stress researchers themselves to continually assess their own work in terms of a model of validity which is appropriate to the problems under analysis.
> (Shipley and Orlans 1988)

Shipley and Orlans describe an interventionist approach to stress research where a phenomenological view of stress is combined with what they term social action theory. This approach, they claim:

> Steers us towards an exploration of the personal meanings stress can hold for different people, as well as towards self-definition. When coping practices and potential changes are reviewed, the individual as social

> actor is also construed as a potential locus and instrument for change. In the dynamic transactional process the person-environment relationship is fluid, and attributions are fluid as to the source of stress and the locus of intervention.
> (Shipley and Orlans 1988)

Although the models, based on the process described by Shipley and Orlans whereby individuals report their personal perceptions of stress and its meaning, have a face validity there are a number of caveats which should be borne in mind. There is overlap between the categories presented in the models and no significance should be attributed to the relative number of observations in each category. More significantly, there are limitations with respect to construct validity and issues of contamination in relation to self report.

A number of stress researchers warn of the risks associated with self report. Bailey and Bhagat (1987), considering a coping skills checklist, observe that:

> Clinical evidence suggests that people may be more aware of the coping strategies they are struggling to use, or ones that are problematic than they are strategies they are successfully using or that have resolved the situation.
> (Bailey and Bhagat 1987)

They suggest further that strategies which dovetail with life routines might go unnoticed and therefore unreported.

Handy (1986) warns that focusing on individual self reporting of stressors is likely to involve the equation of perception with conscious knowledge and the ability to label stressors accurately. This ignores influential forces which people are unaware of and consequently unable to identify. He argues that:

> The task of social science is to explicate these issues more clearly and to provide accounts which explain and complement the respondent's perspective.
> (Handy 1986)

Accordingly, within the framework of this investigation, the models given here, which have their origin in self-report, should be viewed alongside the findings of the NFER Occupational Stress Indicator.

Figure 16: Perceived stressors

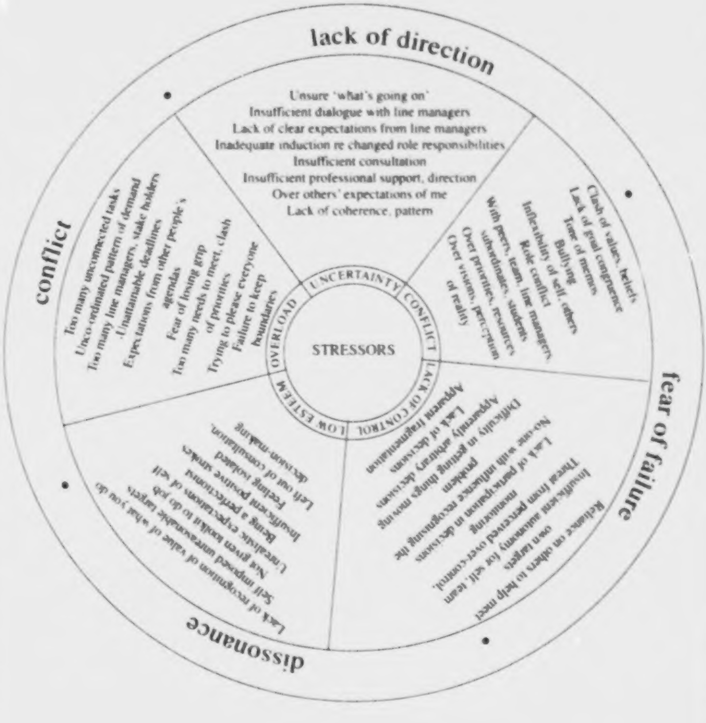

lack of direction
Unsure 'what's going on'
Insufficient dialogue with line managers
Lack of clear expectations from line managers
Inadequate induction re changed role responsibilities
Insufficient consultation
Insufficient professional support, direction
Over others' expectations of me
Lack of coherence, pattern
conflict
Clash of values, beliefs
Lack of goal congruence
Tone of memos
Bullying
Inflexibility of self, others
Role conflict
With peers, team, line managers
subordinates, students
Over priorities, resources
Over visions, perception
of reality
fear of failure
Reliance on others to help meet
own targets
Insufficient autonomy for self, team
Threat from perceived over-control,
monitoring
Lack of participation in decisions
No-one with influence recognising the
problem
Difficulty in getting things moving
Apparently arbitrary decisions
Lack of decisions
Apparent fragmentation
dissonance
Lack of recognition of value of what you do
Self imposed unreasonable targets
Not given toolkit to do job
Unrealistic expectations of self
Being a perfectionist
Insufficient positive strokes
Feeling isolated
Left out of consultation,
decision-making
conflict
Too many unconnected tasks
Unco-ordinated pattern of demand
Too many line managers, stake holders
Unattainable deadlines
Expectations from other people's
agendas
Fear of losing grip
Too many needs to meet, clash
of priorities
Trying to please everyone
Failure to keep
boundaries
UNCERTAINTY
CONFLICT
LACK OF CONTROL
LOW ESTEEM
OVERLOAD
STRESSORS

Figure 17: Managing the stress

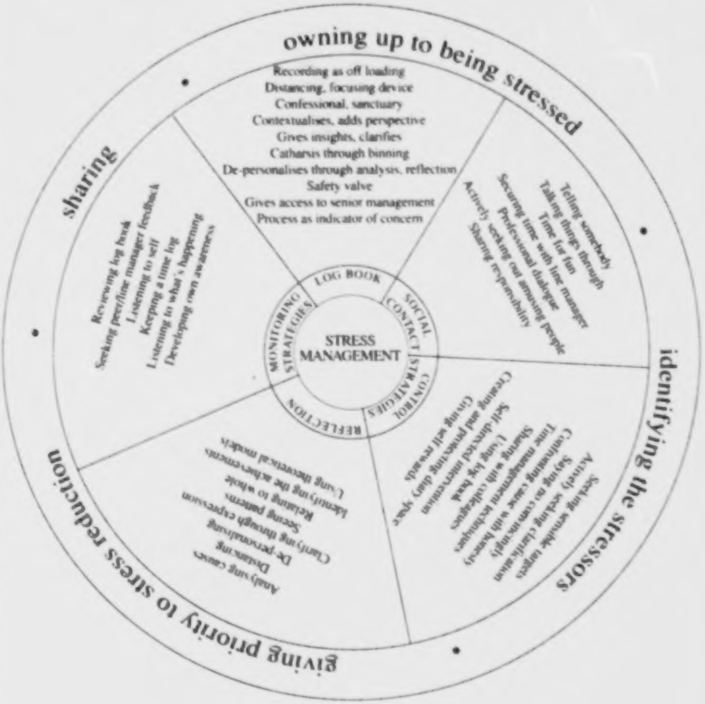
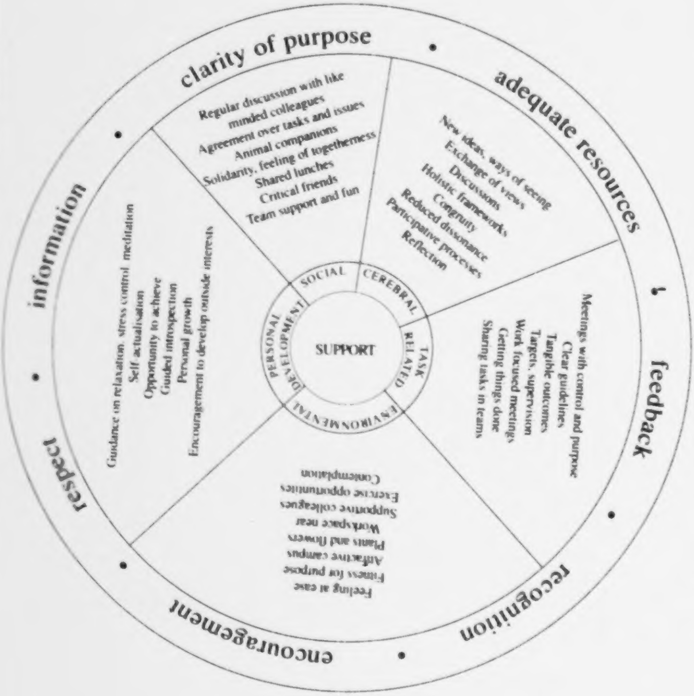

owning up to being stressed
identifying the stressors
giving priority to stress reduction
sharing
STRESS MANAGEMENT
LOG BOOK
SOCIAL CONTACT
CONTROL STRATEGIES
REFLECTION
MONITORING STRATEGIES
Recording as off loading
Distancing, focusing device
Confessional, sanctuary
Contextualises, adds perspective
Gives insights, clarifies
Catharsis through binning
De-personalises through analysis, reflection
Safety valve
Gives access to senior management
Process as indicator of concern
Telling somebody
Talking things through
Time for fun
Securing time with line manager
Professional dialogue
Actively seeking out amusing people
Sharing responsibility
Seeking sensible targets
Actively seeking clarification
Saying no convincingly
Confronting cause with honesty
Time management techniques
Sharing with colleagues
Using log book
Self-directed intervention
Creating and protecting diary space
Giving self rewards
Analysing causes
Distancing
De-personalising
Clarifying through expression
Seeing patterns
Relating to whole
Identifying the achievements
Using theoretical models
Reviewing log book
Seeking peer/line manager feedback
Listening to self
Keeping a time log
Listening to what's happening
Developing own awareness

Figure 18: Support routes


clarity of purpose
adequate resources
feedback
recognition
encouragement
respect
information
SUPPORT
SOCIAL
CEREBRAL
TASK RELATED
ENVIRONMENTAL
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT
Regular discussion with like minded colleagues
Agreement over tasks and issues
Animal companions
Solidarity, feeling of togetherness
Shared lunches
Critical friends
Team support and fun
New ideas, ways of seeing
Exchange of views
Discussions
Holistic frameworks
Congruity
Reduced dissonance
Participative processes
Reflection
Meetings with control and purpose
Clear guidelines
Tangible outcomes
Targets, supervision
Work focused meetings
Getting things done
Sharing tasks in teams
Feeling at ease
Fitness for purpose
Attractive campus
Plants and flowers
Workspace near
Supportive colleagues
Exercise opportunities
Contemplation
Guidance on relaxation, stress control, meditation
Self-actualisation
Opportunity to achieve
Guided introspection
Personal growth
Encouragement to develop outside interests

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Fifteen of the 20 change agents participated in the formal intervention support programme as did four of the six supporters. At both individual review sessions just over half of the change agents reported a perceived positive change in their attitude towards change, their motivation and their perception of stress which they attributed to the programme.

The sample reported preferences for a range of different approaches to stress management and, in particular, to coping strategies.

A recurrent theme in the evaluation indicates that many were not seeking certainty, but what might be termed a sense of order: cerebral support to reduce dissonance and incongruity and to find patterns; task-related activity with clear guidelines; and social interaction leading to affirmation of approaches and solutions.

The stress management workshop was valued by participants but doubts were expressed regarding its long-term effects.

The management of change forum and ethics and values seminars were appreciated both as a source of advice on effective action strategies and as a means of stress reduction through depersonalisation and comparison of experience.

Just under a third of the change agent sample expressed an interest in continuing to keep the log book as a vehicle for stress reduction.

Knowledge of the existence of the support programme led to a reported increase in the motivation and the cohesion of the change agent sample while provoking distrust, even anger, and a sense of exclusion in a number of staff outside the sample.

Despite a reported appreciation of the individual, personal support interventions, with regard to stressors, managing stress and routes to coping, shared ground indicated a need for systemic organisational change incorporating further development of management training, communication and information dissemination systems and staff supervision and appraisal systems.

Chapter 9

The action plan

THE INSTRUMENT

Towards the end of the second term the focus shifted to planning ways to take the various developments forward and to widen participation. During the second individual review session the change agents and supporters were asked to consider ways to move forward on the basis of the experience gained through the project. In particular, they were asked to consider ideas for taking the development forward, for widening participation, and for involving the unconvinced.

Following the individual sessions a pro-forma action plan accompanied by a completed example was sent to change agents and supporters with a printed set of the log book construct analysis sheets which they had previously approved in an earlier draft form. They were asked to contribute as many action plans as they felt appropriate to inform a group way forward planning meeting, held in May.

During May and June interviews were held with the elite sample. The agenda was set by the eight members who selected cues relating to organisational culture, processes and potential development which they considered to be particularly significant with regard to managing change.

THE ACTION PLAN PROCESS

Eighteen change agents and supporters contributed 21 action plans. A number of these were derived from collaborative planning and were jointly owned. Not all the action plans were available for discussion at the May meeting; further explanation and illustration were required by some potential contributors and others needed more time for reflection. To strengthen the network, as the action plans were received a written response was sent putting the originator in touch with other staff who were involved in related developments.

Although the action plans recommend activities and processes to involve all relevant and interested staff there are no specific suggestions in response to the cue 'ideas for involving the unconvinced'. Comments made in the individual review sessions reveal that although the change agents were concerned about the perceived exclusivity of the group involved in the investigation they did not feel it appropriate, or even ethical, to devote energy and time to attempting to persuade openly critical or apparently apathetic colleagues to participate in specific activities.

> You can never get the whole sea to come with you; better to take the nearest in your wake.
>
> People have their own agendas. It's probably best to stay with colleagues who are working towards the same goals. In any case it can be disempowering, being surrounded by people who are moaning most of the time.
>
> Targeting the unconvinced could mean using a lot of energy with little results but if we work with those who are hovering we're more likely to get a critical mass.
>
> We shouldn't make direct approaches but work through osmosis, unconscious cascade, networks. Organic change can happen when contact is made with credible people who've been involved.

Instead the plans assumed that the action suggested would involve an increasing number of staff who would elect to participate on their own terms.

It would appear that the change agents were themselves questioning the use of the label and the implication that they were somehow responsible for the choices of others in the way that Vanja Orlans, stress researcher and consultant, questions the term and approach when she observes during the comparator organisation interview reported in Chapter 10 that:

> The 'change agent' way of working is not effective, or ethical perhaps ...There needs to be a parity, a meeting of people. It is about enabling people to make better choices when they are not so scared. The term 'change support agent' is preferable. If the ulterior is lack of respect for other viewpoints then resistance will not be overcome.

DERIVING THE FRAMEWORK

Mutually reinforcing evidence from the log book construct analysis and review, from the needs identification and analysis, the Occupational Stress Indicator, the Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics and from the support programme evaluation indicated organisational development needs in the areas of communication and information dissemination, staff supervision, appraisal, support and team development.

Three significant initiatives to which the college is already committed – TQM, staff appraisal and Investors in People – were identified as the vehicles through which these needs could appropriately be addressed. A third – health and welfare promotion – was added to develop an enabling infrastructure to sponsor support intervention at individual, group and organisational levels.

Within this framework eight action themes were elicited from the action plans. These are presented in **Figure 19** as learning circles comprising a central theme surrounded by constituent action strategies. Each circle is the basis for a set of recommendations presented in Chapter 11. Employing the learning circles as a focusing device, an action plan summary set each plan within a systemic organisational development framework.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

The action plans vary in terms of the range and complexity of the development they seek, the implicit time horizon for accomplished change, the resources required and, allied to these differences, the level within the organisation at which sponsorship and advocacy is required.

Figure 20 suggests that predominantly senior management sponsorship is required for 16 of the plans, senior and middle management sponsorship for 11, and team sponsorship for four, although it is recognised that in practice the active support and enthusiasm of staff at all levels of the organisation will be required for each area of development. A few of the action plans relate to an extension of programmes and activities already in progress, the establishment of a log book focused peer support group for example and the continued development of systems to facilitate strategic planning throughout the organisation; others suggest new approaches and emphases such as a health and safety work station audit, and a staff occupational health service.

Successful implementation is likely to depend in part on the extent to which the action plans, particularly those that are interdependent, can offer positive reinforcement and mutual support. Johnson and Scholes (1993) refer to the

Figure 19: Promoting the learning organisation: learning circles

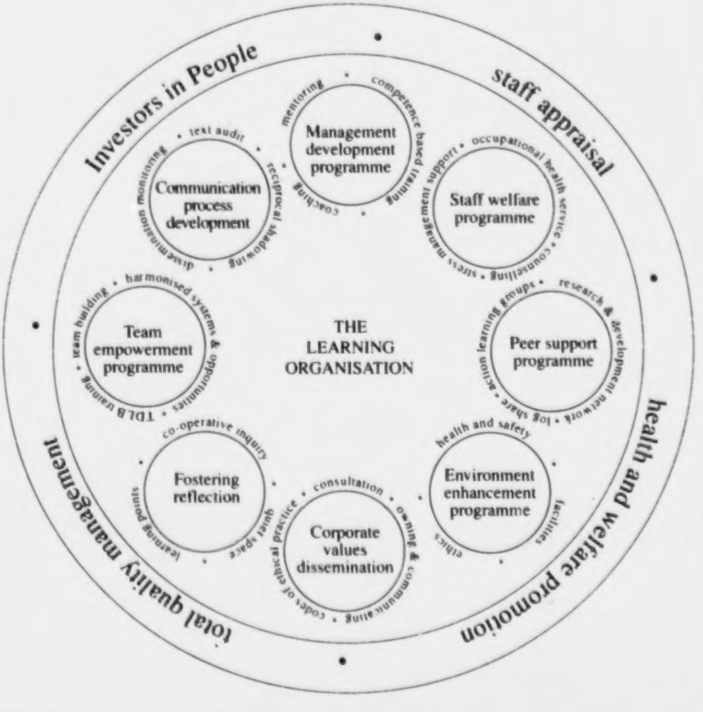

Investors in People
staff appraisal
health and welfare promotion
total quality management
THE LEARNING ORGANISATION
Management development programme
mentoring
competence based training
coaching
Communication process development
text audit
reciprocal shadowing
dissemination monitoring
Staff welfare programme
occupational health service
counselling
stress management support
Peer support programme
research & development network
log share
action learning groups
Environment enhancement programme
health and safety
facilities
ethics
Corporate values dissemination
consultation
owning & communicating
codes of ethical practice
Fostering reflection
co-operative inquiry
quiet space
learning points
Team empowerment programme
harmonised systems & opportunities
TDLB training
team building

Figure 20: Ways forward action plans: responsibility for implementation

Learning circle	*Number of action plans*	*Plan references*	*Lead responsibility for implementation*	*Level of sponsorship needed*
Communication process development	7	2, 4, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21	senior and middle management	senior and middle management
Staff welfare programme	6	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	all levels senior to team	senior management
Management development programme	5	1, 2, 4, 7, 11	senior and middle management	senior management
Team empowerment programme	4	12, 14, 15, 16	all levels	senior and middle management
Peer support programme	3	3, 12, 13	team	team
Environment enhancement programme	3	8, 9, 10	all levels	senior management
Corporate values dissemination	2	11, 12	all levels	senior management
Fostering reflection	1	13	team	team

significance of synergy in achieving strategic change. They also warn that 'the theoretical benefits of synergy are often difficult to accrue in practice'. While it is recognised that the task is not easy I hope that the linking of action plans to learning circles which are in turn embedded within systemic whole college frameworks will facilitate the achievement of value added through such synergy.

Johnson and Scholes (1993) also stress the need to recognise a link between the culture fit of a strategy and its potential to attract support or provoke resistance. Ansoff (1988) cautions that resistance to the implementation of change is to be expected when it involves a high degree of discontinuity in the culture and/or power structure: 'Resistance to planning is not a superficial phenomenon; it has a logic of its own, and it cannot be removed by exhortations from top management.' Nor, one could add, from change agents at any level.

Responses to the Likert Profile (Chapter 5) reveal the change agents sample's preference for participative group management styles accompanied by a belief that the current organisational style was predominantly benevolent–authoritative with some attributes of a consultative system. The desire for involvement, co-operative teamwork and participation which is signalled by their preference underpins the changes and developments recommended in their action plans.

The significance of this for selecting implementation strategies requires further exploration. Although an awareness of the potential of cultural recipes for energising and inhibiting change processes is undoubtedly a useful element in the change agent's kit, the nature of the link between culture and successful strategic change remains unclear. As Wilson (1992) cautions:

> To effect change in an organization simply by attempting to change its culture assumes an unwarranted linear connection between something called organizational culture and performance. Not only is this concept of organizational culture multi-faceted, it is also not always clear precisely how culture and changes are related, if at all, and, if so, in which directions.
> (Wilson 1992)

The individual visions that prompted the change agents and supporters to develop their action plans have been communicated and explored within their network. The shared vision that has emerged and which underpins the learning circles in **Figure 19** requires articulation in a form that will clarify and support the recommendations. As Stewart (1990) advises:

> It is not enough to paint a picture or share a vision of the end-point. Provide as clear a map as possible of the journey you will travel together, with timetables and progress checks ... Make the bridge between the vision and what we're going to do on Tuesday.
> (Stewart 1990)

The timetable for this will vary according to specific recommendations. Planning change can seem rather like creating a linked assembly of kinetic structures; as development spreads or accelerates in one area it stimulates or suppresses growth and movement in another. In such a dynamic discontinuous environment a search for predictable control is a chimera. As Rickards (1985) observes: 'Innovation can never be totally predicted and understanding emerges as the process actually occurs.'

Within a reflective action learning cycle each action plan, as it is implemented, is likely to stimulate new ones. The action plans summarised in Appendix 4 encapsulate the thinking not just of the change agents who contributed them but of the individuals and groups with whom they interact and by whom they are influenced. Through a reciprocal process these action plans are likely to act as catalysts, triggering the development of others from elsewhere in the organisation. Such, after all, is the process which defines the learning organisation.

ELITE SAMPLE INTERVIEWS

The format of the elite sample interviews was designed to provide a vehicle for the articulation of personal testimonies presented and heard with minimum interference from the bias and preconceptions of the interviewer. It was therefore left to each member to select the cues and to decide how to present their perspective, in written form or orally. Five chose written narrative, one a diagram, one talked from notes and one employed a mixture of written narrative and dialogue based on notes and textual evidence. In each case the presentations were supplemented by discussion aimed at clarification rather than debate.

Summary observations, insights and suggested ways forward within the framework described in Chapter 12 are presented in Appendix 4.

There is a considerable overlap between observations and proposals. Five of the sample draw attention to failure in communication resulting in a combination of demotivation, negative stress and reduced efficiency and proactivity. Within this scenario visions are not shared due largely to a perceived lack of congruence in experience, perspective and understanding between staff working at different levels and with different roles within the organisation. Communication process development linked to management training and supportive staff supervision are identified as key organisational needs; Investors in People, TQM and staff appraisal are highlighted as appropriate frameworks to facilitate development. Two of the sample present specific proposals for staff support including the provision of an occupational health and counselling service; staff appraisal and health and welfare promotion are the identified frameworks. One presents an individual approach to enhancing motivation and reflects on the motivating and demotivating potential of formal written communication within the organisation. Communication process development is identified as the key; Investors in People as the relevant framework.

Insights and evidence from the elite sample interviews reinforce and aid interpretation of the other findings particularly with regard to communication blocks and needs and, with the action plans, inform and underpin the recommendations presented in Chapter 11.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

In all, 21 action plans were contributed; the range and complexity of changes advocated and anticipated time horizons vary but eight themes recur. These are communication process development; staff welfare; management development; team empowerment; peer support; environment enhancement; corporate values dissemination; and fostering reflection.

With a degree of synergetic overlap, half of the plans propose developments which could be delivered through the Investors in People framework and/or through TQM, and a third propose developments which could be delivered through staff appraisal and/or health and welfare promotion.

Predominantly senior management sponsorship is required for two-thirds of the plans, senior and middle management for half and team sponsorship for less than a quarter.

More than half of the elite sample respondents perceived inconsistencies among different organisational levels with regard to perspective, experience and understanding. Investors in People, TQM and staff appraisal are identified as appropriate frameworks to support developments. A quarter focus specifically on staff support needs; staff appraisal and health and welfare promotion are the identified vehicles. One focuses explicitly on motivation and identifies communication process development as the key, pursued within the Investors in People framework.

Chapter 10

Comparator organisation interviews

Findings from the log book construct analysis, the first series of review session interviews and from the NFER Occupational Stress Indicator suggested that the sample, and by implication other staff across the college, would benefit from access to a stress counselling service.

Contact was made with three organisations who were known to have experience, either in establishing such a service or in related research and consultancy. Follow up to an article in the local press led me to visit American Express in Brighton. Similarly, articles in the national press prompted me to arrange a visit to Northbrook by a team from the University of Central Lancashire. Both visits took place in March 1993. The literature survey of stress research led me to visit a consultant from Birkbeck College, London University in June 1993; on her recommendation a visit was made in August 1993 to the Post Office in London.

In each case an interview schedule was designed to elicit information on best practice and advice on ways forward for the college. The focus of each interview was staff support; for two of the comparators through an occupational health service providing stress counselling, for the third through stress and control research and consultancy and for the fourth through research and counselling related to issues of professional ethics.

AMERICAN EXPRESS OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Tessa Cunliffe-Steel, Occupational Health Department Manager, was appointed in 1976 to establish the service. The concept was initially sponsored at international corporate level although the department is autonomous and strict confidentiality is maintained at all times. The department provides a service for approximately 4,500 employees and has an annual budget of £180,000. This covers occupancy, salaries and equipment. The treatment service costs £30,000 per year. First aid courses are paid for out of individual managers' budgets but administered and run by the Occupational Health Department (OHD).

There is no published organisational staff welfare policy although the OHD has a policy document for internal department use which managers may consult. All staff have an entitlement to use the services with the department which has an open door system from 8.00 am to 5.00 pm. Tessa Cunliffe-Steel described the department's brief as to look at the effects of health on work and work on health. The department is staffed by a full-time manager and two full-time occupational health nurses. An occupational physician attends for one afternoon per fortnight. The nursing staff are trained in basic counselling skills; staff can additionally be referred to external qualified counsellors. A nurse is available every day between 8.30 am and 3.00 pm; between 3.00 pm and 5.00 pm the receptionist/administrative assistant, a trained first aider, is available.

The service emphasis has changed gradually from a reactive treatment service to a proactive, preventative service. The focus on treatment provides the opportunity to offer other support; as was observed 'Someone may visit to ask for a plaster and stay to talk about family problems'. The emphasis on treatment, however, can also be restrictive, preventing more proactive developments. For this reason it was decided not to remain open until 5.00 pm for treatment but rather to use the 3.00 pm to 5.00 pm slot for such activities as workplace visits and management training related to health and safety and for ergonomic assessment. The department does not act as a 'second opinion' agency which could undermine the work of general practitioners. Indeed, close links are maintained between the OHD and GPs.

Of the 2,500 employees based in Brighton, 600 to 800 visits are made to the department each month. Of these 30 to 40 per month either seek or accept counselling. These may be self or peer referrals or they may have been referred by their line manager who has observed a lowering of efficiency or quality in their work or an above-average sickness record. Their counselling may be paid for from their own resources, from the Occupational Health Department's budget or from their department manager's budget. A healthline is provided for staff outside Brighton.

The service is publicised through literature dissemination and is introduced to new staff during their three-day induction. The department's staff also attend staff meetings to talk about occupational stress and other health issues. No systematic market research surveys have been undertaken to determine client needs. Monthly trends, aggregated from the daily log sheet, provide information on service take up. It is felt that individual appointments for stress and relaxation counselling are less disruptive than taking groups of people out of work for one or two hour sessions. Staff are also unwilling to give up their lunchbreaks or evenings and so appointments are made at 'convenient' times for individuals within the working day.

The service portfolio includes well-woman and well-man clinics, one hour counselling sessions, coronary risk screening, weight reduction and advice on healthy eating, alcohol and drug problems and smoking, a chiropody clinic, blood donor sessions and sight tests for VDU users. Additionally the department provides pre-employment health checks, executive health screening, inspections of company premises, hospital and home visits, a rehabilitation advice and advice for travellers travelling abroad.

Currently, American Express is going through a vast organisational change. Some redundancies were unfortunately inevitable and staff morale has been affected. Staff presenting to the OHD with stress-related problems are offered counselling and relaxation therapy and managers are taught to recognise the early warning signs of stress.

No attempt has been made to demonstrate links between the provision of the service and staff sickness, absence rates and performance although it is believed within the department that such links exist though difficult to prove. It was, for example, observed that staff who feel slightly unwell may be more likely to come into work when they know they can visit the department for treatment or to use the rest room. Additionally, European directives on health and safety are making the organisation more aware of the need to have its house in order ready for audit. It is believed that the work of the department could help to prevent litigation arising from occupational injuries.

Based on this experience, Tessa Cunliffe-Steel advised that an occupational health presence within Northbrook would be an advantage, particularly in view of the new health and safety legislation. She suggested that the college could establish the service with one nurse, holding an occupational health nursing certificate or diploma, on five mornings per week, the estimated cost being £10,000 per year for 20 hours per week. Alternatively, the college could subscribe to an occupational health specialist agency, to buy in a service for a proportion of time per month.

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL LANCASHIRE, CENTRE FOR PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

The centre was established on January 1st 1993 following the completion of an ethics and values audit within the university. Both the audit and centre were championed by a dean of faculty, Dr Christine Henry, who left her post to lead the development which was supported by the Rector through the full-time secondment of six staff for six months. The centre has identified its primary role as 'to provide a stimulating learning environment for students and to promote the full potential of individuals participating in educational and research activities'. It is 'committed to good ethical practice in research, teaching and consultancy'.

Acting as a research and publicity centre it offers consultancy with regard to developments such as those arising from the recently conducted ethics and values audit.

An ethics committee, established in January 1992, is chaired by Dr Henry with representatives drawn from faculty ethics groups and from areas of the university where ethical dilemmas are likely to occur. Current development work includes drafting a code of professional standards and practice and a statement on the welfare rights of staff and students. With regard to the latter, a medical service is available and a staff counsellor has been appointed to provide personal and stress counselling.

During the ethics and values audit (a full report of which was published in September 1992) a hotline service recorded 85 cases involving 'genuine' moral dilemmas within three months. Although the centre does not have a continuing remit for this service the calls have continued, demonstrating a felt need. The centre staff are aware of the relative proportions of male/female and of different grades and type of staff using the service, but the data have not been processed or publicised in case it contributes to stereotyping or threatens issues of confidentiality. They did, however, observe that male senior managers were included in the groups using the hot line.

The service is marketed through targeting of staff in areas where ethical dilemmas were expected, such as counselling and welfare, environment and health and safety. An in-house newsletter has been used to disseminate information. A network of supporters has been established with representatives in all faculties. In promoting the service the audit team were careful to stress confidentiality and action to 'put things right', rather than whistle-blowing.

It was reported that during the audit staff appreciated having someone with whom to talk through dilemmas. The team emphasised that it was not in the business of arbitration, nor did it have a remit to offer professional, personal counselling. Colleagues could therefore be referred if appropriate. It was believed that apart from the established need for the hotline service, some staff would have welcomed stress counselling. The team, however, was clear on the boundaries involved; the ethical implications of stress management itself pointed to a need for integrity in the provision of such support.

With regard to establishing links between the provision of an ethics support service and staff sickness, absence rates and performance, the audit team had not had time to investigate this. They expressed concern, in any case, that such an investigation might be threatening to staff. It was also felt that it would be difficult to establish a causative link between absence or sickness and a particular intervention.

Recommendations for Northbrook were that an ethics and values audit should be employed as a management tool designed to help address organisational stress and fragmented communication. It was further suggested that the log book analysis could form the evidential base for the audit which should be customised and owned by the college.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON – BIRKBECK COLLEGE STRESS RESEARCH AND CONTROL CENTRE

The remit of the centre is to conduct research and provide a consultancy service for external organisations; there is no formal link with the university's staff welfare service. It was founded by two lecturers/researchers, one of whom, Dr

Vanja Orlans, provided information on organisational approaches to staff welfare and support and consultancy advice on a way forward for Northbrook. (Dr Orlans now runs a private practice in organisational consultancy, training, counselling and psychotherapy.)

Describing alternative practices, Dr Orlans warned that welfare and employee assistance programmes are often tagged onto existing management systems and practices and are often not used as a basis for organisational learning. The focus is on the individual and not on the structure and function of the organisation as a whole. She perceives this approach as a deficit reductionist model of individual illness, based on an artificial dualism between the individual and the organisation. An alternative, process model, would use the data derived from individual experience to help the organisation learn and move forward. 'Band-aid' programmes (such as counselling) may also be needed where, for example, a reorganisation has taken place and staff feel frightened. It was observed that: 'If they are frightened they cannot be effective or creative. There is a need to deal with danger and conflict first, to investigate whether there is enough support for creativity to take place'.

An holistic, targeted approach to providing support was recommended. This could follow an initial survey conducted to uncover relevant issues, to quantify and organise impressions and to provide insights into the relative balance of individual and organisational factors. Individuals may need help in identifying and recognising what support is available in the field. With regard to creativity they may need help to contact this energy. Assertiveness training may be needed; it was suggested that managers for example may not feel able to say 'I don't know how to communicate this', 'I'm frightened of my secretary', 'I don't know how to do this task'. Where such fear exists, aggression can too often be used instead of assertiveness. Reflecting on organisational culture and management styles Dr Orlans observed:

> The input/output model and the need to meet targets quickly is fine, but the overall health of the organisation also needs considering – it can be useful to create space for review and stocktaking – for challenging existing models ... a kind of 'helicopter' view.

When asked what her recommendations would be to a college seeking to support staff in a time of rapid, discontinuous change, Dr Orlans stressed the need to think organically, to consider the balance in the organisation – between, for example, 'controlling' and 'helping', between 'task focus' and 'support'. She recommended an initial broad brush needs analysis, the focus being 'naming and working with where the organisation is', with what is actually 'true' at that time. I found her observations on the term 'change agent' at once unsettling and illuminating; they reinforced a shift already underway within the action planning process from proactive activity targeted at persuading colleagues to 'change' in prescribed directions to a more organic process focused on listening to inform the development of a collaborative partnership model of support and organisational change. As Dr Orlans observed:

> Many organisations are 'on the run' ... Our interest therefore is in uncovering and staying with what is, in all its difficulty, to enable choices to be made and change to occur. There is always flux, and in stability change will happen – so the term 'change agent' is inappropriate in a sense. Also from a democratic perspective, it is not for me to decide how to change you: you must change ... this way motivation and commitment are greater.

Within the systemic frameworks selected – Investors in People, TQM and staff appraisal – there are opportunities for such parity and joint ownership of change. Within this context the term 'change support agent', suggested by Dr Orlans, is indeed, more appropriate than 'change agent'.

During the consultation specific advice was sought on developing an integrative approach to organisation stress counselling. Observing that the value system of the counselling world may be different from the prevailing culture, Dr Orlans suggested that one way of building a bridge would be to bring the two worlds together in a training context so that organisational issues can be allowed to surface and integrative strategies collaboratively planned.

One strategy would be for a college counsellor to prepare a report for management, a profile of groups of staff showing numbers and trends with regard to concerns, lifestyle and health issues, supported by case studies. (Such a process would need to be developed with the full consent of individual clients, and would need to protect individual anonymity and the contract of confidentiality between counsellor and client.) Such data could be used to support an occupational health programme. However, there would probably be a need to work within the college towards perceiving counselling as a support rather than as a stigma. Managers would need to be clear and honest with staff about individual and shared responsibilities. Counsellors working within the context of organisational stress would possibly need some management training to induct them into the organisational system. A theme running through the recommendations was expressed by Dr Orlans as a challenge 'for people to be clear with themselves, for honest communication with regard to responsibilities at all levels'.

THE POST OFFICE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

On the recommendation of Vanja Orlans, a meeting was arranged with Gozina Pender-Takke, Chief Nursing Adviser. The Post Office occupational health service was established in 1969 when the Post Office was separated from the Civil Service. To provide a service for approximately 200,000 employees the service employs approximately 100 staff including a chief medical adviser, chief nursing adviser, 15 doctors and 55 nurses.

Two separate organisational policies, for occupational health and for welfare, are included in the staff manual, held by the personnel departments. Under these, all staff have access to the occupational health service for advice related to the effects of work on health and health on work. The service includes health advice, and personal and stress counselling.

The service portfolio includes first line counselling to address problems that are affecting work; this comprises a maximum of four one hour sessions with a trained and supervised occupational health nurse. Local management can elect to pay for a further four sessions with an external specialist counsellor.

Stress management and 'living with change' seminars are customised for groups at all management and staff levels. Gozina Pender-Takke observed that the Post Office has learned that, with respect to managing change, it is helpful if support is given to the people directly involved. When a change is planned managers may request a seminar as a forum to let anxiety surface and to help individuals realise they are not the only ones feeling stressed. The seminars also provide staff with ideas on how to manage change more effectively. Sick leave is then expected to remain at a stable level or decrease. These seminars appear to resemble the management of change seminars organised by the Northbrook Research and Developmen[illegible]t as part of the support programme. Other services provided are critical incident debriefing, health assessments for new staff and those returning after long-term sickness absence, environment-related health assessment and health screening.

A recent study established that the service portfolio includes 66 per cent case work (including advice to managers on pre-employment health assessment, sickness absence and employee counselling) and eight per cent health promotion. More than 70 per cent of the case work is referred by management with just under 20 per cent self-referral.

Support for new services is sought through presentations to members of the board and/or senior management. In response to the question 'What kind of support do the staff find most helpful?' Gozina Pender-Takke observed that whereas previously 10 years was regarded as the period available to implement and adjust to change within the Post Office organisation, change is now constant. Many of the staff have been in the organisation a long time: 40 years' service is common.

> The living memory is that if change comes there is time to implement it gradually but in fact, staff are having to change from first to third or even fourth gear rather than from first to second. So the living memory gives messages that conflict with the actual needs.

Many therefore appreciate the support that the 'living with change' seminars offer. Here there are echoes of change agents' log books.

Links between the provision of an occupational health service and staff sickness absence have been demonstrated within research specifically carried out within the Post Office (McDonald *et al.* 1986). Although individual managers continue to query 'what value do you add, that I can cost into my plan?', the fact that over 70 per cent of the case work is management referred is felt to indicate a recognition of the links. With respect to issues of business ethics it was reported that as part of a total quality business, all the services, business units and sub-contractors have mission statements including statements of values.

Asked to offer specific advice to Northbrook, Gozina Pender-Takke recommended the appointment of a fully trained occupational health nurse who is able to advise on all safety and health aspects of the business and who, by nature of the work s/he is trained to do, could also run seminars on stress management, living with change and other health-related seminars. 'Managing change is, after all, a health topic because if we don't manage it, we have a health problem.' Responsibilities should also include running first aid courses and advising on how health issues affect work.

One caution was introduced. It was suggested that nurses who have not undertaken formal occupational health nurse education before are unlikely to have knowledge of the legislation pertaining to work. Given the current increase in litigation where employees contest advice and seek damages, it was recommended that an induction course with continued legal advice and monitoring should be provided.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

All staff are entitled to use the services provided by the occupational health service within American Express and the Post Office.

The service is resourced in both companies through a combination of a dedicated occupational health service budget supplemented from departmental budgets by managers who may purchase additional counselling for their staff.

At the University of Central Lancashire a hotline service to provide support for staff experiencing stress from ethical dilemmas, recorded 85 cases within three months.

Experience and advice varies with respect to establishing links between the provision of an occupational health or, in the case of the University of Central Lancashire, an ethics counselling service, and staff sickness absence rates and performance. Research has established such links in the Post Office; DHSS statistics suggesting links were cited by the consultant from Birkbeck College; informants from the University of Central Lancashire queried the validity of what was perceived as a potentially threatening investigation. At American Express it was believed that such links existed but that they were difficult to prove.

Recommendations

Support systems such as an occupational health service should be embedded within an holistic organisational development framework where data derived from individual experience can be used to help the organisation learn and move on.

'Band-aid' programmes should be provided when there is a need to reduce anxiety and address immediate felt needs.
There is a requirement for clarity and honest communication with regard to responsibilities at all levels.

Managers and staff counsellors could work together in a training context to address live issues.

Counsellors could prepare a staff profile recording numbers and trends with regard to concerns, lifestyle and health issues.

An ethics and values audit should be employed as a management tool designed to help address organisational stress and fragmented communication.

The college should appoint a nurse holding an occupational health nursing qualification. The nurse's duties should cover advice to management on health and safety, first line personal and stress counselling for staff, facilitating seminars on health topics including the management of change, first aid training and staff and environment health assessments. Supervision, particularly with regard to legal implications, should be provided.

PART III: TOWARDS THE LEARNING ORGANISATION

CHAPTER 11: Conclusions

Chapter 11

Conclusions

THE FINDINGS

A summary of the main findings is displayed in **Figure 21** using a format based on the broad research questions posed in Chapter 2. A triangulation process is employed comparing findings derived from the range of complementary data sources employed in the investigation. The composite picture provides a detailed snapshot of key features of organisational culture and management practice viewed from the perspective and derived from the experience of a specific group of change agents and supporters whose felt needs are articulated within the findings.

The process of allocation of findings under key headings has been undertaken on the basis of judgements with regard to the relative significance of the insights contributed by individual findings to each set of research questions; where appropriate, findings are recorded under more than one heading. Support needs are sub-divided into individual and organisational, although it is recognised that these categories overlap. Organisational needs have generally been encapsulated within the learning circle programme titles which are employed as organisational devices in the action plans and in the recommendations.

Figure 21: Summary of main findings

Data source: Log book/review sessions (sample = 26)

Communication

Improved through:
- contextual information, explanation, consultation re. decisions
- enabling mechanisms re. dissemination
- appropriate detail, language
- information re. gatekeepers
- guidance re. chairing
- supported envisioning
- accessibility of managers
- valuing of different experience, visions

Motivation

Increased by:
- involvement, recognition
- visible results horizon finished products, positive feedback
- clear role, responsibilities
- awareness of goal congruence
- information re. managers' intentions
- visibility of managers
- empowerment within clearly communicated parameters, supported autonomy

Creativity

Fostered through:
- exposure to other ways of seeing
- critical friends, safe climates to test ideas
- reflection, permission to pause, be still
- study, research, discussion
- freedom from unacceptable pressure
- believing suggestions will be valued

Stress

Key stressors include:
- lack of control
- overload, pressure
- discontinutity
- wasted time, interruptions
- lack of participation in decisions
- isolation
- responsibility
- role conflict/overload
- interpersonal

Support needs

Individual:
- guidance re. responsibilities, managers' expectations
- information, feedback
- critical friends
- training and development
- team support

Organisational:
- management development
- communication process development
- team empowerment
- corporate values dissemination

Figure 21: Summary of main findings, continued

Data source: Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics (sample = 26)

Communication

Responses reveal:

- an apparent lack of a common, shared perception of a whole organisation culture
- a perception of the current dominant culture as benevolent–authoritative with restricted and mostly downward information flow
- a clear preference for a shift towards a more participative organisational culture
- a felt need for a supplementary upward communication system
- a widening gap between the accuracy of perceptions of superiors and subordinates of each other

Motivation

Likely to be decreased by:

- general mismatch between perceived and preferred organisational culture

Stress

Likely to be increased by:

- a general mismatch between perceived and preferred organisational culture
- a shift in the direction of high goals sought by superiors

Support needs

Individual:

- clarity re. goals, expectations
- information
- involvement

organisational:

- communication process development
- management development

Figure 21: Summary of main findings, continued

Communication	*Motivation*	*Stress*	*Support needs*
Data source: NFER Occupational Stress Indicator (sample = 20)			
		Main sources of pressure scored above average: • relationships with other people • career and achievement • organisational structure and climate • home/work interface	Individual: • social support • autonomy • influence, involvement Organisational: • management development • peer support programme
Data source: Needs identification and assessment (sample = 20)			
High strengths of need with large gap between need and extent met for: • receive information • participation in decisions	Likely to be decreased by: large gap between need and extent met for: • involvement at strategic level • incentives Likely to be increased through attention to strong need for: • achievement • personal development	Likely to be increased by: large gaps between strength of need and extent met for: • resources • receive information • congruence between responsibility and accountability	Individual: • achievement, competence • interpersonal relations • credibility • receive information • resources • personal development • pleasure and fun Organisational: • communication process development • peer support programme • management development programme

Figure 21: Summary of main findings, continued

Communication	*Motivation*	*Stress*	*Support needs*
Data source: Voluntary support programme evaluation (sample = 20)			
Common stressors, routes to coping indicate a need to develop: • communication infrastructure • information dissemination system	• most participants attrributed increased motivation to programme • amongst non-participants, knowledge of existence of programme led to increased motivation	• most participants attributed a positive change in attitude towards stress to programme • a range of differing coping strategies are employed	Individual: • varying and occasionally contrasting needs Organisational: • management development • staff supervision and appraisal • communication process development
Data source: Ways forward action plans (sample = 18)			
A third of the action plans focus on communication process development			Individual: • welfare needs • peer support Organisational: • half of the plans could be delivered through Investors in People, TQM • over a third through staff appraisal • a third through health/ welfare development

Figure 21: Summary of main findings, continued

Data source: Elite sample interviews (sample = 8)

Communication	*Motivation*	*Creativity*	*Stress*	*Support needs*
Over half emphasise a perceived lack of congruence in perspective, experience and understanding between different levels in hierarchy	The majority include a focus on motivation and identify communication process development as key	Stress is perceived by one as the major factor suppressing creativity	One half refer explicitly to staff experience of stress	Individual: • clarity of purpose • information • involvement, valuing • peer support • professional counselling Organisational: • management development • staff appraisal • health/welfare development • communication process development
Data source: Comparator organisation interviews (sample = 4)				
Recommendations include: • formal system for reporting staff needs to management • forum for interchange of experience, views between occupational health team and managers	Recommendations include: • management of change seminars to reduce anxiety and redefine purpose and goals		Recommendations include: • support for staff experiencing stress related to ethical dilemmas and to experience of change	Recommendations include: • band-aid programmes to address immediate needs • establishment of occupational health service • joint training programme for managers and staff counsellors • ethics and values audit

Discussion

In general the findings support the theories and fit with the models of change and stress management to be found in the literature. A number of specific findings directly corroborate and sometimes extend findings reported in the research literature.

Fullan's (1991) observations on the problem of meaning chime with elements within the log book testimonies. It would seem that proposals for change at whatever level championed do not always make sense to practitioners. Both 'false clarity' and 'painful unclarity' are represented in the log books and findings from all the instruments testify to the complexity and significance of the relationship between the personal and organisational meaning of change and indicate a link between experience, motivation, self-esteem and stress. The link between on the one hand, motivation and energy for change, and on the other, access to information, which Carnall (1990) posits within his change equation model, is relevant here. Findings from almost all the instruments indicate support needs linked to information and clarity of purpose. Recommendations 1–3 and 6–8 (**Figure 22**) are based on these findings. They entail the encouragement of reality testing (Carnall 1990) as a means to energise those who will be involved in implementation. Within this process there will be encouragement to listen to the articulation of differing perspectives and to be open to learn from the experience and reasoning of colleagues at all levels. The timetable for developments will need to accommodate this.

Hedberg's (1981) caution that organisations frequently know less than their members, particularly when rapid changes in the environment overload the communications network, is corroborated by the emphasis placed by the change agents on information and communication systems development. The log book findings also illustrate the process on which Mintzberg (1991) bases his theory that managers may experience difficulty in communicating effectively when they delegate because some of the information they need to disseminate is linked to right brain activity and therefore removed from their verbal consciousness. The change agents make frequent reference to their difficulties in grasping the visions of their managers and in fully understanding what is expected of them; hence one of the emphases in the findings on a need for clarity with regard to managers' intentions. The recommendations 7–9 and 12 concerned with management development, are based partly on these findings.

Evidence from the log books also supports the findings of the study carried out by Alexander (1989) and reported by Buchanan and Boddy (1992). They identified 10 most frequently occurring change implementation problems in the 93 private sector firms interviewed. These include the following which parallel the personal experience and observations of the change agents:

- co-ordination of activities was not sufficiently effective;
- competing activities and crises distracted attention;
- uncontrollable external environment factors had an adverse effect;
- departmental management leadership and direction was inadequate;
- key tasks and activities were not defined in sufficient detail.

Tapping related organisational experience, the log books also support the hypotheses put forward by Kanter (1984) and Morgan (1986) among others which suggest that bureaucratic, mechanistic, segmentalist structures impede innovative development through fragmentation. Many of the log book entries point to ineffective inter-departmental and inter-faculty/directorate communication causing barriers and obstacles to change. They also exemplify the problems of inaction and lack of co-ordination which Morgan (1986) describes when he suggests that complex issues 'float up the organizational hierarchy as members at each level find in turn that they are unable to solve them'. Recommendations 1–3 address these issues.

Practice and experience are shown to vary across the organisation. Findings from the Likert Profile corroborate Lawrence and Lorsch's (1968) theory that organisational style may need to vary between sub-units to take account of detailed characteristics of sub-environments. They also support Lorsch's (1970) suggestion that the structure of an organisation is not immutable and that managers can exercise considerable choice over the set of complex variables involved. The Likert findings reveal an awareness by the change agents of different organisational styles in use across the college. This is also relevant for Buchanan and Boddy's (1992) model of change agency where the agenda priorities, role and competences of the change agent will vary according to organisational context. These findings have contributed to recommendations 10, 11, 13 and 14 concerned with staff development and support for those acting in a change agent capacity.

The experience of the change agents, as recorded in the log books, validates the warnings given by Buchanan and Boddy (1992) that managers across an organisation may be pursuing different agendas and that the politics of the organisation may lead to changing priorities. Many change agents recorded frustration both at what they perceived as overt and covert opposition from some managers to changes they had been charged to implement and at perceived changes in organisational priorities which led to reductions in the level of support they received to progress the changes. The recommendations arising from this (2–4 and 6) recognise that the complexity of organisational development will involve the parallel pursuit of different and occasionally competing agendas and that the organisational priorities will be subject to change given the discontinuity of changes in the turbulent external environment. The emphasis is therefore on improved communication to clarify and disseminate the reasons for changes in strategic and tactical agendas.

Many change agents expressed a need to contribute to decision-making, or at least, to have the reasons for decisions affecting their work to be communicated to them. This corroborates the views expressed by Morgan (1986) and Carnall (1990) concerning the direct and indirect influence and significance of information system design. Carnall suggests that most work cannot be accomplished without the support of an informal communication network. The change agents identified informal interactions as valuable, many of them expressing dissatisfaction at the low level of informal and formal contact they experienced with their managers. They also stressed the importance of formal information, briefing and feedback sessions such as can be facilitated through the Investors in People framework and, in particular, through staff appraisal and review. Other needs expressed by the sample support Carnall's (1990) suggestion that individuals have four main categories of need if they are to rebuild their self-esteem following an experience of change. The experience reported through the log book, needs identification, Likert Profile, NFER OSI and support programme evaluation incorporates the expression of needs in all four categories; that is the need to receive intelligible information, to develop new skills, to receive support to deal with problems, and empathy. The reported experience and identified needs also reinforce Johnson's (1987) observation that where changes are perceived as threatening to existing power groupings, heightened group solidarity may result and protective mechanisms may be employed, including the denial of the competence of those promoting the new ideas. The change agent's high level of need for credibility suggests their recognition of this and their concern to see the threat addressed.

One aspect of the advice Fullan (1991) gives to counter the risk of overload is not entirely supported by this research. Fullan recommends that prioritisation and integration should be accomplished at individual and small group level. The Northbrook change agents reported stress experienced as a result of perceived overload resulting from insufficient guidance regarding management expectations and priorities. This would suggest that although individuals and teams may well be expected to prioritise and integrate the demands of a range of simultaneous changes, they require clear guidance, supervision and support from their managers. Recommendations 3–5, 7 and 10 aim to address these needs through a range of peer- and manager-facilitated support processes.

One set of recommendations (8–10) concern activities designed to help Northbrook managers and other change agents develop appropriate competences. The competence clusters (goals, communication, negotiation and managing up) and associated attributes, identified as requirements for effective change agency by Buchanan and Boddy (1992), appear to be consonant with the reported experience and needs of this change agent sample. Their individually articulated focus for change, log book observations and responses to the Likert Profile suggest that they view their change agency task from the 'mutual–adaptation' perspective described by Fullan (1991). They do not perceive their task as to get an already developed innovation faithfully implemented in practice but rather to act in a clarifying, facilitating role to support colleagues who take ownership of developments through a process of customisation. Their action plans endorse a further recommendation of Buchanan and Boddy that the symbolic function of rational–linear planned change processes should be employed to legitimise the actions of change agents. This entails imparting comforting messages of organisational rationality, thereby facilitating the establishment of what Johnson (1990) terms a new dominant logic. The action plans suggest that systemic processes linked to Investors in People and TQM should be employed to drive forward the developments the change agents perceive as significant in the establishment of a learning organisation culture.

The findings also provide insights into the forms and levels of stress within the organisation. The examples of variables typically included under the categories of stressor, strains and coping presented by Love and Beehr (1981) are congruent with the self-reported and measured experiences and perceptions of the change agents and supporters. They include the stressors (role overload, ambiguity and conflict), the strains (tension and anxiety) and the coping methods (counselling, exercise and relaxation training). The advice given by Carroll and White (1982) and Shapiro (1982) on supervision to provide support to reduce and alleviate stress is supported by the identified needs of the sample. Shapiro lists the following elements of a supervisor's potential contribution, all of which are identified within this investigation:

- leadership;
- timely and accurate communication;
- explicit roles and policies;
- support and nurturing;
- the provision of space for creativity and innovation; and
- the fostering of peer networks for friendship and support.

Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 7–9 and 14–20 are made bearing in mind a consistent message within stress research that interventions such as stress management workshops, although they may meet felt individual needs, should be accompanied by the development of sound management practices to address the causes of stress within the organisation. This message is consonant with the advice given by Vanja Orlans in a comparator interview and with that given by one of the elite sample, herself a trained counsellor.

The needs expressed, particularly through the Likert Profile and needs identification, and advice proffered by the change agents, chime with the list of nine key hallmarks or assumptions about creating a learning organisation which Hayes *et al.* (1988) derive from their summary of the literature. In particular, three encapsulate the underpinning values the change agents seek within the college culture:

- All employees are responsible, thinking adults who inherently want to do their best.

- Workers will surface important problems and concerns if they feel the organisation will respond appropriately.

- Better performance occurs when artificial differences in how people are treated are removed.

Similarly, the change agents' log book observations support a recommendation made by Morgan (1986) as a guideline for developing a learning-oriented approach:

> Encourage an approach to the analysis and solution of complex problems that recognises the importance of exploring different viewpoints.
> (Morgan 1986)

The recommendations 4, 5 and 7–10 are made with this approach in mind. The picture Pedlar *et al.* (1988) paint of the learning organisation at the transformation stage also resonates with the expressed visions and needs of the change agents. It depicts an organisation with flatter management structures within which managers are developed to become coaches and facilitators rather than directors of activities. The measures of achievement Pedler *et al.* list include several of the change agents' specific recommendations:

- a staff counselling service;
- a concern to establish competitive advantage in social and ethical terms as well as commercial and monetary;
- a willingness to learn from and with others; and
- the use of envisioning activities.

These recommendations also relate to the five processes which Jones and Hendry (1992) regard as key factors in the creation of the learning organisation: team learning; changing power structures; leading change; giving vision; and expressing concern for social and ethical issues. They conclude that few studies, if any, have concentrated on how employees generally perceive the organisation in which they work. The significance of this investigation may well lie in its base of practitioner experience and perception. The recommendations for effective change management derived from the experience of the change agents are not presented as easily achieved ways forward. The reported literature on change management incorporates caveats regarding the tendency of organisational development models to give rise to simplistic recipes. The recommendations will be subject to further debate and feasibility studies and, when implemented and used as guidelines, to rigorous monitoring. The complexity of the process of change is recognised.

Significance for Northbrook: the management implications

Each of the instruments, separately, has enabled evidence to surface that has significant implications for the evaluation and further development of management processes within Northbrook. Common themes, such as the need for clarity to be achieved through information and guidance which have emerged as findings have been cross-referenced. But, from an holistic perspective, what are the dominant messages for the college? What and how can the organisation learn from the reported experience and advice of a sample of its own change agents? Perhaps for any organisation, the most significant learning is learning to learn, particularly when the learning is of the double-loop kind described by Argyris and Schon (1974) and Morgan (1986). Before this research can inform the process of change management and contribute effectively to an improvement in organisational practice, managers at all levels will need to perceive the meanings derived from the research data as an authentic record of 'the way it is, at this time, in this college'. Only then can the learning proceed. This learning is unlikely to be entirely comfortable; it is, after all, a change process. I do, however, maintain that it is essential learning if college managers and staff are to remain healthy and able to cope within the current professional environment of discontinuous change.

The personal experience and observations of the change agents point to a need for change agency competences to be developed at all levels. At the macro level, the organisation needs to develop systemic competences to protect it from the danger of sabotaging the implementation of the changes it is itself championing. Flawed communication processes involving ineffective decision-making, inappropriate gatekeeping, inefficient information dissemination and inadequate participation should be amended. Avoidable stressors arising from management styles and processes must be identified, acknowledged and reduced. The infrastructure for staff supervision, guidance, support and development should be further integrated with the strategic planning process to enable roles and responsibilities to be clarified and needs to be identified.

At the micro level change agency competences, identified through this research, should be developed at all levels. This will entail the creation of a raft of development opportunities and support mechanisms. Individuals, managers and staff will need to recognise their own stress and be prepared to articulate their needs and to accept and give support: there are signs that this is beginning to happen. Only when we are able to free our minds from unacceptable levels of stress can we be creative and innovative, receptive to change and able to recognise opportunities and take the risks that will lead to further learning.

Taken together, these proposed developments represent a significant change in culture.

My own learning

I have had the opportunity, through this research, to learn more about myself, my colleagues, the college and the process of change support and management. This has been of enormous value and is a continuing process. I have achieved this learning through multiple roles, acting as a change agent within the action learning framework, as a manager planning organisational research and development, as a member of staff receiving and giving support, as a staff developer facilitating learning and as a researcher adding value to data through analysis and interpretation. Through this action and reflection I have had to recognise and accept changes in some of my beliefs and have reaffirmed others. I have also learned to view some of what I have experienced myself from the perspective of others. Hopefully this will have improved my own ability to empathise and to be prepared to recognise and validate others' visions. I have become more conscious of the complexity of the communication task and more aware of the need to allocate time to listen, to select the appropriate medium and to struggle to find the right words. Consequently I am now less likely to assume a shared conceptual framework, shared experience, shared meaning. I am now more fully aware of the risk described by one of the change agents:

> There's a danger of thinking that because you've expressed it, others have also. There can be a problem when managers experience a major development of thinking while going through the process of decision-making and then assume others have the same perspective. They haven't. It hits them cold and they feel alienated.

The research has given me tools and insights to help me understand some of the reasons for resistance to change and to help me work on some of the blocks. I am now conscious of the messages I and my manager colleagues give through the decisions we make as we prioritise and allocate our time, attending some meetings rather than others, choosing a memo rather than the telephone, visiting one site rather than another, staying in our offices or choosing the workspaces of others as the place to meet. I have become particularly aware of the risks associated with the perceived invisibility of senior managers.

When I first planned the research and talked through my ideas with colleagues who became the change agent sample I did not anticipate that stress management would become a central concern. I suggested that we used the log books to record experience and observations related to communication, motivation and creativity, not stress. As the action learning process unfolded I learned that creativity, and by implication innovation, will be stifled by the negative effects of high stress levels. I have become more adept at recognising my own stress and that of colleagues and more able to employ and facilitate coping strategies. Perhaps more significantly for a management perspective, I have learned to perceive the links between factors related to organisational culture and processes and levels of staff stress.

Through dialogue with one of the comparator organisation consultants, through the literature and through debate within the college I have learned that the term 'change agent' can signify an unequal and therefore inappropriate balance of power, a lack of respect and valuing and a lack of recognition of shared responsibility within the process of change. The term 'change support agent' seems more appropriate and will be used from now on.

All this personal and organisational learning could lead to paralysis as recognition grows regarding the size and complexity of the process of organisational change. Fortunately, as well as revealing the scale of the task the research points to strategies for making it manageable. I have learned to identify systemic frameworks within which to integrate the cluster of developments required to address the needs identified within the investigation. The recommendations that follow advocate, where possible, the enhancement of existing management structures and processes as against the establishment of new ones. This should be cost effective and should reduce the risk of fragmentation and systemic conflict.

I have also been reassured by the enthusiasm, resilience and openness to learning exhibited by the change support agents. Like any tyro learning organisation Northbrook has a journey ahead – but it won't be a tedious one. There is plenty of energy, positive commitment and creativity throughout all levels of the organisation and a willingness to perceive changes as challenges through which to learn and grow. Within the journey, those of us who are managers have a specific challenge. As Drennan (1992) advises:

> Top management may well be genuinely committed to their goals, but if employees don't see visible evidence in their own areas of work they simply don't join in ... It is not the talk that counts, it is the example. It is what you do that convinces employees of your real sincerity. If employees have to interpret between your words and your actions, they believe what you do is your true motivation. And regretful as it might be, they are absolutely right.
> (Drennan 1992)

THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Figure 22 presents the main recommendations arising from the research findings. The learning circles which grew out of the change support agents' action plans are used as an organising device and, to clarify origin and ownership, each recommendation is cross-referenced to individual action plans. In each case the systemic framework is identified to encourage an holistic approach thereby maximising the opportunity for synergetic overlap.

For most of the recommendations the major cost will be in time, particularly managers' time. Meeting these opportunity costs will, for many, involve changes in their perception of the core responsibilities within their role. Such a cultural shift will not be easy to achieve even for individual managers who accept the validity of the recommendations and who wish to action them. The four recommendations that entail substantial direct costs are those that have been formulated to provide the support and opportunities for development which will be needed if the other recommendations are to be successfully implemented. Other costs such as increased inter-site travel, support staff time, paper and printing costs, accommodation for meetings and seminars, refreshments for participants, though real, I would expect to be at a level that can be absorbed by the centre. They should also be offset by savings from the increased efficiency and effectiveness across the organisation that should follow successful implementation of the recommendations.

THE WAY FORWARD: PROGRESSING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are interlinked within the systemic frameworks provided by Investors in People and staff appraisal and underpinned by a total quality approach and a concern to promote a healthy, caring organisation. The learning circles provide the central themes which Quinn (1989) identifies as the means to draw 'diverse efforts together in a common cause', thereby helping to maintain focus and consistency in corporate strategy. Quinn suggests that such themes should be developed into a:

> ... matrix of programs and goals, cutting across formal divisional lines and dominating the selection and ranking of projects within divisions. (Quinn 1989)

I find it hard to argue with such advice but then, as Director for Development, my responsibility is to develop, champion and facilitate cross-college policies, systems and processes that span the boundaries between faculties, departments and units and that require a whole college perspective and loyalty. It would be naive for me to expect directors of faculty and heads of department to accept recommendations for cross-college policy changes without engaging in a struggle for ownership involving scrutiny, dialogue and probably challenge. Failure to accept and engage with the cultural and political dynamics of change is likely to increase the risk of what Johnson and Scholes (1989) refer to as strategic drift. Where the proposed changes do not fit easily with the culture greater resistance and wider drift may be expected. The recommendations are derived from the reported experience, observations and suggestions of the change support agents who, through the Likert Profile in particular, expressed a preference for a shift towards a more consultative, participative culture. It may be that the strategic fit between at least some of the recommendations and the dominant culture of the organisation, or of sub-units within it, may not be close and that active or passive resistance may result.

I anticipate that the college's commitment to Investors in People and the development work that will follow the commitment will prove an effective vehicle for widening the support base for the recommendations and, eventually, for achieving a culture shift in the directions proposed by the change support agents. Most of the recommendations (1–6, 8 and 12) have been incorporated in the Investors in People action plan, debated within the strategic management team (SMT), endorsed and submitted to the local training and enterprise council (TEC). As the action plan is implemented, further development and monitoring of the appraisal scheme, and in particular of the process of training needs analysis and staff development, should support the delivery of further recommendations such as 9 and 10. Recommendation 8, the establishment of a management development programme leading to NVQ accreditation, has been implemented. As Director for Development I have overall responsibility for the college Investors in People programme. This validates further my personal commitment to place visibility, accessibility and communication at the core of my role, furthering recommendations 3–5.

The action learning research programme to develop change agency expertise will be underway soon, as will the MBA development programme that comprises recommendation 9. The broad estimated costs of the three development programmes have been built into the curriculum and staff development operating statement and budget for 1994/5.

Recommendations 6, 11, 13, 14 and 20 comprise activities sponsored by the Research and Development Unit and have already been agreed with the core membership who were responsible for the planning on which the recommendations are based. Other recommendations, for example 7 and 12, relate to areas for which my directorate has responsibility. If I have learned anything from this research, however, it is that consultation based on active listening and respect for other perspectives is an essential element in progressing any development. I shall therefore invite my colleague directors and heads of department to consider the recommendations with their teams and to make their own suggestions, particularly with regard to implementation.

Recommendation 15 is the shared responsibility of those of us who have declared an intention to continue the log book and a wish to meet occasionally to share ideas, anxieties and progress.

Two recommendations, 17 and 19, are currently under debate at SMT level. Depending on the outcome I expect them to be progressed through the IT and accommodation strategy reviews that are taking place now. Recommendation 18 has been implemented. A wider debate on organisational health with a specific emphasis on stress control and management is under way. This leads me to recommendation 16. A cost benefit identification has been carried out related to the appointment of a part-time occupational health nurse. Although my research has convinced me of the value of such an appointment I recognise that there will need to be a further study to determine whether the benefits will outweigh the costs and whether the reallocation of existing responsibilities which would result from such an appointment is justified. The legal implications of providing such a service will be explored. Colleagues in key roles have been invited to join a staff support working group. A programme of activities is being devised which will pilot elements of an occupational health service. The programme is supported through funds allocated from the development budget. Following evaluation recommendations will be made to the academic board. This may lead to the appointment of an occupational health nurse during 1995.

It is my intention to nurture a process of authentic, creative debate as the recommendations move through consultation towards implementation. This should, in itself, further the development of Northbrook as a learning organisation. I do not expect this to be easily achieved. It is, however, essential that the college listens, with respect and attention, to the voices of its staff and that, collectively, it is able to develop new ways of thinking and new ways of acting to meet new challenges. There are costs involved in this for, as the testimonies of the change agents reveal, change can be painful, particularly when the way is unclear and support is not found. There are, however, even greater costs to meet if the organisation resists or is not able to learn. As Morgan (1986) warns, 'an organisation which cannot change to accommodate the ideas it produces and values may well block its own innovations'. It is also likely to sap the commitment and creative energy of its staff, its most valuable 'invisible' assets. It may even do damage to their health and ultimately to its own. The benefit to be gained through daring to learn may well be greater than the cost of not learning. It should indeed be the development of an innovative challenging and caring community, the model learning organisation described by Pedler *et al.* (1990):

> The learning organisation is a Utopia which not only meets the market place pressures of rapid response and collective learning from mistakes, but which also creates organisations fit to house the human spirit.
> (Pedler *et al.* 1990)

It is appropriate that the learning organisation is described as a Utopia, literally a no-place. The learning organisation is not a reachable destination; it is a journey. The log books of the change support agents are, in a sense, travel journals. They record the journey of one group of staff in one college around the time of incorporation. The recommendations encapsulate our learning on that journey and are signposts for the way forward.

Figure 22: The recommendations

Learning circle	*Recommendation*	*Timescale*	*Individual action plan ref.*	*Framework*
Communication process development and Corporate values dissemination	1 Committee structure quality audit incorporating review of membership, roles, terms of reference, information dissemination and agendas leading to production of guidelines for chairs and faculty/department representatives re. gatekeeping, participation and dissemination.	In progress	11, 12, 16	Investors in People
	2 Information/decision gatekeeper identification and review of college policy leading to written guidelines for all managers/staff and, where appropriate, staff development for gatekeepers.	In progress	11, 12, 16	Investors in People
	3 Audit and continuously monitor the development and sharing of corporate vision, objectives through the strategic planning process and appraisal scheme. Provide additional guidelines and staff development as needed. Aim for full staff participation.	Begin Jan 1994	2, 16, 21	Investors in People, staff appraisal
	4 Encourage senior and middle managers to increase their visibility and accessibility through timetabled surgeries, sampling meetings, allocating time to walk around sites, pausing to listen and talk.	Immediate	11, 20	Investors in People, TQM

Figure 22: The recommendations, continued

Learning circle	*Recommendation*	*Timescale*	*Individual action plan ref.*	*Framework*
	5 Reduce the amount of paperwork by discouraging memos, reducing multiple copies and encouraging more telephone and face to face contact.	Immediate	16, 17, 18	Investors in People, TQM
	6 Combine curriculum, staff, quality and strategic information newsletters and provide regular, succinct briefings on strategic and organisational development issues.	Begin Jan 1994	17	Investors in People
	7 Provide workshops for managers and other change support agents on communication; relate theory to practical advice and illustration	Begin March 1994	16, 17	Investors in People
Management development programme	8 Establish accredited in-house management development programme incorporating MCI/NVQ levels IV and V for team/section leaders and HODs. Ensure coverage of competences needed for change agency and in particular for mentoring, coaching, envisioning and team empowerment (maximum 10 per year).	To be decided, begin April at latest	1, 4, 7, 11 14, 19, 21	Investors in People

Figure 22: The recommendations, continued

Learning circle	*Recommendation*	*Timescale*	*Individual action plan ref.*	*Framework*
Peer support programme	9 Establish in-house delivery of externally accredited year 1 MBA modules for HODs/management spine (maximum four per year).	Begin Sept 1994	4, 11, 21	Investors in People
	10 Establish in-house, externally accredited, action learning research programme designed to develop change agency expertise, open to all staff (maximum six per year).	Begin Jan 1995	12, 20	Investors in People
Fostering reflection	11 Develop system to ensure appropriate dissemination of findings/recommendations of research projects. Introduce contract for sponsored staff, incorporating a commitment to disseminate summary and conclusions.	In progress	20	Investors in People, TQM
	12 Introduce induction programme and mentoring for staff whose roles change significantly.	Begin Jan 1994	6	Investors in People
	13 Continue RDU programme of occasional management of change seminars, open to all staff.	Begin March 1994	12, 13	Investors in People

Figure 22: The recommendations, continued

Learning circle	*Recommendation*	*Timescale*	*Individual action plan ref.*	*Framework*
Team empowerment programme	14 Encourage peer support network through making RDU resource base available for information exchange/meetings.	Immediate	13	Health and welfare promotion
	15 Continue log book share meetings as long as need is felt.	In progress	3	Health and welfare promotion
Staff welfare programme	16 Appoint a part-time occupational health nurse, responsibilities to include staff counselling, stress management seminars, workstation health audit and health promotion.	To be decided 1995 target	3, 2, 5, 6 8, 9, 10	Health and welfare promotion
	17 Develop staffing services' MIS capability to enable the provision of regular reports for managers on trends in staff sickness to support policy decisions on management development and health interventions.	To be decided 1994 target		Health and welfare promotion, Investors in People, TQM

Figure 22: The recommendations, continued

Learning circle	*Recommendation*	*Timescale*	*Individual action plan ref.*	*Framework*
Environment enhancement programme	18 Include head of Counselling and Welfare Unit and occupational health nurse in management development workshops/meetings to facilitate exchange of information/perspectives.	Begin Jan 1994		Health and welfare promotion, TQM
	19 Establish an additional staff sitting room on each of the two main sites to be used as a 'quiet space'.	To be decided 1994 target	6, 8, 9, 10	Health and welfare promotion, TQM
	20 Establish a loan collection of relaxation, meditation and stress reduction tapes and books in the RDU resource base.	Begin Jan 1994	8	Health and welfare promotion

Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

The log book

LOG BOOK GROUND RULES

Purpose

The aim is to assemble a base of personal observations, reflections and analysis which can be drawn upon to inform the process of improving communication, reducing stress, enhancing motivation and encouraging creativity in a period of innovation and change.

Confidentiality

The log will be seen by me and no-one else unless you wish to disseminate its contents wider or you agree with me that I can quote identified elements in the project report.

Scope

There is no expectation regarding depth, breadth or detail. This is not a competition to produce the most perceptive, stimulating or original log. Variety of approach, focus and presentation is the aim. The idea is to have fun and to experiment.

Monica Ralph
June 1992

LOG BOOK: REVIEW SESSION INTERVIEW RECORD

Cue: General experience of keeping the log book

Review session 1

- I began with good intentions then became frustrated. I'm very conscious that I was feeling negative at the beginning of term so things were written then that I felt strongly at the time. Now I see them from a different perspective.
- I didn't know whether to include 'profound thoughts', how personal to make it, how much reflecting what other people say. I'm not good at keeping it as I go along.
- I see the aim as to get feedback from different areas of the college. You may get irrational, out of tune feedback but if you get enough then you can get an objective view of what's going on and you need to have that. I've not kept it like a diary as I went along but tried to keep a record when something went wrong and then returned to the entry to check progress, to keep track and analyse. This way I've related the problem to future positive development in that area.
- I've found it very difficult to do. I haven't been methodical although I've carried it around all the time. It reflects activity as against vision. Occasionally I go back and fill in weeks retrospectively, at a distance and therefore sweeping. I believe it would be more valid to do it close to the event, then it would tend to be more micro in concentration with thoughts at the time.
- I'm not a diary keeper. When you first introduced the idea I felt it was great but I've not used it as often as I expected for silly practical reasons like I didn't have it with me. I've concentrated on visual representations.
- It's been like the sump in the engine, useful but gets clogged up with details. I found it useful when I wanted to put something in it.
- I've used it very sparingly – I forget it's there most of the time. I only seem to remember it in times of frustration – it's not consistent why some things get recorded and others don't.
- I find it generally useful although I have difficulty finding the time. I've used it as a diary recording how I feel at the time. It's sketches,

I didn't want to write in words, it's easier to draw how I feel as against saying it. It's a log book as an extension of me.

- I could have got more from it if I'd found a way of disciplining certain 'reflective' time to do it. I've used it as an angry confessional which has benefits but I've done it for you rather than for me. If I'd done it for me I'd have done it a different way, with post-its or a wipe clean board. The log book way haunts me and makes me relive it.
- It hasn't been used much at all – it's like a diary and I'm not someone who goes in for diaries. It could have been negative and I'd rather not remind myself but look forward to another day. There's nothing in depth and not on a regular basis.
- Fear of blank page, of making the first mark – my thoughts have turned to it in terms of what it will be, the vision of what the thing is going to look like but I have no vision, lots of blocks and I'm conscious of time passing.
- It's plotted the development of my personal anger – in a way I wish I hadn't kept it because it's become very negative. It's negative evidence I would have forgotten and possibly been less angry and depressed as a result – but I also needed the release of writing down negative things.
- I'm happy about the log book – I like writing things down. I was concerned it would become negative so I tried writing something at the end of each week and split comments on the page deliberately between positives and negatives. The theory is that if after a period of time the negatives have not converted to positives then nothing has moved on.
- I haven't used it – this sort of thing is alien. I would need guidance on the sort of thing to put in it if I kept it from now on. If it was time-consuming it would be a difficulty because I feel I have no time to do things I have to do now – there are pressures there all the time.
- It's a scrapbook as against a diary – it includes quotes, not just personal observations. It's an excuse to use cartoons, probably helps me [to] cope but also enjoyable. It's personal stress management, a holiday-journal type record of my journey.
- I completely misunderstood the purpose of it at the beginning so I put all my ideas/hurts in it – now I've extracted some. I'm not sure how

committed I am to this research – I feel it's yours rather than mine but the idea is good – expressive and creative as against analytical.

- I've been keeping it more as a diary than a log book. I looked them up in the dictionary and a log is a record of travel and a diary is a record of events. I'd find it difficult to use it in other ways than as a diary – I stay on the surface, I'm too busy to be deep. But now I've looked through the log it's telling me all sorts of things I didn't think it would tell me.

- I don't relate to diaries. I'm happy to talk about how I feel but I don't confide to paper. It would have been an effort to make time, it would have meant not doing other things.

- I found it very difficult. I don't feel I've used it 'enough' and it feels like a pressure. Meeting now to talk about it feels like a test – I'm not sure what you want and I feel I ought to know. I feel I ought to have brilliant ideas I could implement.

- I'm too busy to keep it. I already keep a priority style set of notes in my diary. Also I tend to prioritise at 9.00 am, I don't then write it down on paper. I look to same day response. I would think as against write down reflections. It doesn't serve a useful purpose because it's additional to what I'm doing.

- I find it so frustrating. I'm not enthusiastic about the log book, it's like hitting my head against a brick wall. I've a sense of nitty-gritty problems. I wouldn't be listened to. There's so much anger and stress [that] the log seems trivial. I feel nothing will be done, no-one takes any notice.

- I find it difficult to remember to do it, things occur to me later and sometimes I put them down.

- It's one long narrative. I feel motivated to use it when I feel most discontented. I use it as someone I'm talking to, like a diary.

- I'm not sure I've used it the right way. I found it difficult and it's probably more negative sounding than it should be because I only remember to use it when I'm feeling stressed.

- Most of my comments are invective, exclamations, acid or negative comments, gripes. It's very difficult to put positives because of my feeling of distress, insecurity, frustration at not being able to change things.

- In retrospect I wish I'd used it more regularly. At the time it helps me stand back and empathise with other perspectives, understand more why things are happening, to depersonalise. Now I go back over it and record tactics, strategies to cope, change things.

Review session 2

- It's an indication of the state of life that I've had no time to think about writing it down, otherwise I would have done more. It still has value and it would have been good to stop and reflect more but I have been reactive to one thing after another. The first time round the log book was used for 'binning' and that was therapeutic but now I would have liked to reflect.
- I haven't used it at all since our last meeting. I've not felt so much need to express myself in writing. Some of the issues have been dealt with so one reason why I haven't used it is because things are improving.
- It's been interesting in helping me prioritise issues and reflect on problematic events that have happened.
- This term has felt quite different, there's been less of a huge weight this term. I haven't written about the same things and I've found it harder to do. I've tended to dwell on a few things that have happened rather than on feelings. Maybe I'm now more aware of making use of the comments.
- There's been a more haphazard use over all. I've had less to say and it's all drawings. I see the log book as 'giving permission'. I'm putting things in the log because I will report them to a 'senior and approachable' person.
- I haven't used it since the last review. On looking back through it, a lot of good has come out of it. However, it seems to be so charged with negative feelings I don't feel it did myself much good. So while I value the experience of doing it for a short while, it's not a process I would wish to continue. If I had continued it would have been more of same sort of stuff and curiously would have been doing it out of loyalty and respect for the research.
- Only three entries – it goes to the back of my mind. It wasn't a bad idea to start with, a tool, but not a continuing support. I usually prefer very practical routes.

- No pictures this time but bits of script. I've looked back and reflected, moved on since the bleak account, seen how things have changed.
- I've looked at it benignly but then the moment has passed. Although I spend time reflecting it tends to be when I'm driving, walking the dog so I don't record it. I really like the idea of the log, I can see it can be useful. I could notice differences which are imperceptible when they're contemporary, 'lived in the now'. However, reflection has been kick-started by the log and I know I've shifted a lot.
- I still don't find it useful so I haven't used it.
- I don't think it's my thing. I'm a private person, I don't feel it's appropriate. All I need to note down are things – names/dates/ happenings.
- I've used it to record personal experience and comments on what's happening in college.
- I've had less time so there are less inputs but I'm still happy to do it.
- There's nothing in my log book – I'm still so busy – there's really no time.
- It's a real form of stress management for me to put things into pictures. I wanted to start to analyse, to cross the action line from reflection so I've now begun to be more proactive. I find it enjoyable – it's the sort of thing I like doing.
- I haven't kept it going – it's not my way, I prefer to use a tape. I did it the first time just to try it out.
- I haven't been good about keeping it up. It's been our busiest term and it's been more difficult to find time. Nothing has really changed for me and I don't want to just repeat myself. The log book for me is not a continuing activity but it might be helpful again in a year's time. I'll keep jotting in it.
- It's still not kept, I don't have a confessional relationship with paper.
- I feel that if you'd said 'I want you to keep it for a month', if there had been a finite/contained period I might have used it more. It feels like a thing which goes on for ever.
- I'm not using the log book, I find it a burden.

- It's not been kept because of pressure of work. It's another job to do.
- I've not had a spare moment, I feel a bit guilty. The log book was a help last term but the stress always builds up this term.
- It's like doing your homework, a thing I've got to remember and force myself to do. There's a danger of it becoming one long whinge, a focus on things that are wrong – so I'm unhappy about the total impact. However, it's also a useful opportunity to write about things that matter and are important but might not necessarily be reported.
- I've not started again after a longish gap. I felt inspired to write. I've tried to include the positive things.
- It's not been as personal this time. I've been thinking of the team as against me and looking at change. I record first thoughts and then come back to them later when they've formed into larger, more refined ideas.
- I'm still getting a lot out of the process. I've tended to use more pictures, to represent situations, phases and then to reflect on them. I've also started to go back and add comments/ideas from other people.

Cue: Perception of the influence of the logbook activity on your own motivation

Review session 1

- Keeping the log book hasn't affected my motivation but being part of the change agent process has. The reflection, looking at change as an item, being part of a group with that agenda was useful. The log book was not the sharp end of that. It was more cathartic than motivational. (No)
- Yes it focused my thoughts and therefore was an aid to motivation. (Yes)
- It has increased motivation because it's mostly been used as a de-stressing device. When I look back, reflect and consider ways of improving the situation it motivates. (Yes)
- To some extent it has increased motivation but it's not been a major influence. (Yes)

- In a positive sense it has motivated by acting as a spur to action, by crystallising ideas and making situations more manageable, by helping clarify and through a process of self affirmation. In a negative sense it is the expression of a very negative situation and it can remind you of that and make you think 'what is the point?' (Yes)
- It can help if, having recorded an initial reaction of frustration, one reflects and acts on the basis of the reflection. (Yes)
- In one sense no, the mechanism has very little effect on my motivational needs, I'm self driven. In another sense if one believed that some of the things discussed might seep through the system through the use of your senior position then it would be motivational. But there would be a long time horizon and one would need to make the connection. (Yes)
- Probably not but it's had an influence on the way I sort out problems. (No)
- It can be de-motivating because writing has permanence and can haunt, make you relive instead of letting go. If you look back too soon when it's raw it can be haunting but if you reflect when there has been some healing then it can help to go back. Going through the log during the review meeting is motivating and supportive. It helps communication and ideas arise from it for what you would do if you had the time. (Yes)
- Yes, writing something down makes you realise you must do something about it. (Yes)
- Where does motivation come from? Reflection is a mechanism of avoiding the danger of treating work as a mere functional process – makes you reappraise what doing, keeps interest. (Yes)
- Initially it was a positive motivator but later the reflections were negative and angry. (Yes)
- The process of writing has motivated me but if I hadn't written in the log book I'd have written it somewhere else – but maybe not in one place. (Yes)
- Not relevant, I didn't keep the log book. (No)
- It's hard to say because it coincided with participation in a course and it's like a pennant for that course culture. I can't really distinguish

between the two but it's been very motivating on the whole and it happens to have coincided with a period when my attitudes have changed. There is a movement forward in the log, a learning from what has gone before. (Yes)

- Yes – it's been motivating as a sounding board, having permission to do what you like with the medium. (Yes)
- It hasn't made any difference to my motivation. It's just a record. All the things would still have happened. I wouldn't have done things differently even at the time. If I felt so when I look back and reflect it would be demotivating. (No)
- I haven't kept the log book. (No)
- It's not a motivator in itself but maybe it will become so. (No)
- I haven't kept the log book. (No)
- I haven't kept the log book. (No)
- It made me write down things I would have kept to myself. It's hard to know whether that's motivating or de-motivating, it depends on the situation. (No)
- It only motivates through hope that by writing things down in the log it will be possible, through reporting them, to make things better. (Yes)
- Not really – except it motivates me to change things, to act. (Yes)
- The process of keeping it is an intrusion on time and that demotivates but having the chance to talk through concepts, float ideas, maybe influence the system is highly motivating and very satisfying. (Yes)
- Not at time, but I am motivated in retrospect when I look back, reflect, plan action. (Yes)

Review session 2

- I still feel that it is the process, the focus on change that is motivating, not the log book itself. (No)
- I haven't used the log book since the last review meeting. (No)
- Yes because if you can write things down and talk things over it brings

release. Collective insights and collective listeners motivate by promoting development. (Yes)

- Yes I think it has motivated although I'm not sure. The fact that you have to reflect, to write it down is useful at times. (Yes)
- Probably not, less so than when I first started using it. It's not a motivator, it just reflects the situation. (No)
- I haven't used the log book this term. (No)
- Not really. (No)
- I'm not sure, it's made me focus. Is that motivating? (No)
- Yes because I've really reflected on the positive. It's made me more aware of what's worked well. Also, the whole project not just the log book has clearly drawn us together as change agents and supporters. The common identity gives us permission to work together. It's motivating. Now when we reflect verbally instead of feeling it's indulgent we see it as essential to communication. We've been given permission to do so. (Yes)
- No – I still haven't used it. (No)
- I haven't kept it. (No)
- Yes it's helped clarify and that motivates. (Yes)
- It can be used in an analytical way but I don't know whether that's motivating or not. (No)
- I think it might have helped if I'd had time to use it. (No)
- Yes, in two distinct ways. It's the kind of thing I like doing, a pleasurable outlet for recording things and then even where I'm recording stress, it's when I'm on top of it. (Yes)
- I can't say because I haven't kept the log book. (No)
- I don't think it's had an effect on my motivation – that comes from elsewhere. (No)
- No – it's still not kept. (No)
- No, not really. (No)
- I'm not using the log book. (No)

- No – I haven't used it. (No)
- Not this term. (No)
- No. I was concerned it might demotivate through stress and negativity. (No)
- Probably yes, it brings ideas to mind – makes you focus on them. (Yes)
- Yes definitely, a most useful thing – a year ago I felt really frustrated, by the first review session I was a bit uptight, by Christmas it began to have an effect on my motivation. (Yes)
- It motivates me to solve problems, unblock situations I've recorded. It makes me focus on positive solutions. (Yes)

Cue: Perception of the influence of the log book activity on fostering/expression of your own creativity

Review session 1

- I think I recorded things as against created them. (No)
- Yes – now I've organised it so I write things up after I've mulled them over. It's creative in the positive thinking/way forward sense. (Yes)
- Yes, it's given me ideas. By logging things and getting the pattern of things and reflecting I can come up with possible solutions. (Yes)
- In a small way, I've used it to reflect on how I'm feeling at the time rather than for creative thinking. Still, I have seen some patterns and it might be creative eventually. (Yes)
- Yes, by clarifying it makes for an easier start to creative problem solving. Perhaps because at the moment it's only an expression of existing ideas so there's been too short a time to say. I may go back over it and think what could be done. Now I've expressed it, it might be a launch pad for something further. So the book itself lends itself to, demands, a development. (Yes)
- No, I give vent to creativity in other areas of my life. (No)
- No – the log book is where I put moans and groans, not where I put positive things. (No)

- Well I think the drawings are very strong – creative in intensity of emotion. (Yes)
- Yes I'm sure – floating ideas on the air feels like a creative process – playing with ideas. (Yes)
- I've had ideas, but not as a result of the log book. (No)
- I don't know. Ideas are just part of everything – I don't see ideas as being separate to everything else. It stems from looking for patterns in chaos, looking for relationships that make sense. (No)
- Yes it's helped me be open to positive examples of good practice for change. (Yes)
- It looks visually creative but I would have had the ideas anyway. (No)
- I didn't use the log book. (No)
- Yes I now feel keen to go out and innovate, contribute, to adopt a more creative approach. (Yes)
- Yes because creativity is about dialogue, getting things out. It allows me to do that and to go back over it, see what the highlights are, question certain assumptions. The pay off needs to be that people feel energised. (Yes)
- If you'd asked me before I went through the log I would have said 'No' but now I feel perhaps it has. (Yes)
- No I'm not using it. (No)
- If we define creativity very widely, it's helped me to look at time management and stress control and to be creative with these as against being overwhelmed by them. (Yes)
- No, I don't use the log book. (No)
- Not applicable, I haven't used it. (No)
- Not really. (No)
- I enjoy the creative process of writing but it hasn't stimulated ideas, instead it has caused me to focus on ideas that need recording. (No)
- I don't know. I've tried to be creative. I've stuck some things in it and done some drawings. (Yes)

- I don't think it's enhanced creativity, it's not a format I like. I'm not good at writing down thoughts in that way, I can put them into poetry or a novelette. (No)
- I wanted it to be visually creative and up to a point it is but more significantly it has aided the process of right brain activity – generated ideas which I can later analyse and reflect on – but this has a long time horizon. (Yes)

Review session 2

- No, I haven't used it as much as I intended this time round. (No)
- I haven't used it at all since our last meeting. (No)
- Oh yes – it's helped in getting ideas. (Yes)
- No, I don't find it's been useful in that direction. I feel more creative in situations where I'm interacting with people. (No)
- Only in the sense that I still enjoy doing the drawings but they're reflections on the situation, not ideas or solutions. (No)
- I haven't used it since December. (No)
- No I don't believe so. (No)
- Yes, it's given me the opportunity to be insightful. (Yes)
- Yes the process is creative, it encourages lateral thinking. (Yes)
- No I wouldn't use it that way. (No)
- No I haven't used it. (No)
- In a way but it would have helped more in that respect if I'd been less frustrated and stressed. (Yes)
- The approach has been creative. I'm not sure the log book encourages it but it enables me to display it. The entries are about things I would think about anyway but I suppose you could argue that by writing it down you make it easier to think creatively about it. (Yes)
- Well no, I haven't used it. (No)
- It's visually creative. It's also summative as against formative creativity and a record of reflections, not actions. Planning happens in my mind, I only scribble at a later stage. (Yes)

- I haven't kept it since the last review. (No)
- Sometimes, when I look back through it, it gives me ideas but I wouldn't keep it specifically for that reason. (Yes)
- No the log book is still not being kept. (No)
- It depends how we define creativity. I've used the log to handle anger constructively and to keep me thinking clearly. (Yes)
- I'm not using the log. (No)
- I've not kept the log. (No)
- No I've not had a spare moment. (No)
- No I don't believe so. (No)
- No, but I do try to think of something creative to put in it. (No)
- Well, it has encouraged me to write down ideas when I think of them so they don't get lost. (Yes)
- It's still helping me to focus my thinking on broader patterns of events, to reflect on the culture of the organisation, to devise coping strategies and, hopeful, positive ways forward. (Yes)

Cue: Perception of the influence of the log book activity on your own stress level

Review session 1

- Yes there's definitely an element of catharsis, of dumping things down on paper as a way of binning them. It's quite congruent, a black book in which to bury things. There's also a thin element of it that occasionally contributes to stress through guilt at not having done it. (Yes)
- Not really but it hasn't been much of a stress doing it, either. (No)
- Yes, I've recorded stressful events in detail to diffuse them to stand back and later to share. (Yes)
- It may have helped, particularly on time management but it is itself a little bit of a stress. (Yes)

- Yes, through the process of expression it clarifies and as confusion is a cause of stress it takes one level, aspect, cause of stress out. It helps me come to terms with myself and my own views and to decide whether to take it further. (Yes)
- Recording is offloading but in the most stressful periods I'm too stressed to use the log book. (Yes)
- It's increased it slightly because it's one more thing to do. (No)
- I've used it as therapy but I'm unsure whether it is keeping the log book or the opportunity to talk things through which is the help. It told me a lot about my perception of the role and job – perhaps it's telling me I should take my foot off the accelerator. (Yes)
- It's often written when I'm so stressed and in a cathartic state regarding work so it's some kind of sanctuary. (Yes)
- I found it stressful writing it so I didn't write much. (No)
- I don't feel particularly stressed and I have mechanisms for dealing with stress – no real point in swearing, my approach has always been to solve it. There are stressful periods at particular times of year, overload, physically wearying. I wouldn't use the log. (No)
- Yes the log book has helped, it's given me insights at a particularly vulnerable time. (Yes)
- I don't suffer from stress. (No)
- It's just another stress at the moment. Perhaps I would enjoy it but it's another job that there's no time for. (No)
- It came as a surprise that it's a good way to manage stress. At first it was easy to think negatively and to indulge in ego-defensive thoughts in the entries. Then I used the log book to identify my own strategies and it's been part of a process of reducing stress through developing a more general view of my role in the college. (Yes)
- It does help to relieve stress through talking things through. (Yes)
- I suppose I have occasionally found it slightly stressful, having to fit it in. But it probably helps me cope – if I feel very stressed I write down how I'm feeling and it makes me feel better and so lessens my stress. (Yes)

- I haven't kept the log book. (No)
- Yes it provided a place to reflect on my role within the college and to monitor my stress levels. When stress levels have been building up, writing it down has allowed me to reflect and move to control it. But the book has also been a test and a pressure. It's double edged which intrigues me – I can't get to the root of it. (Yes)
- I'm not using it. (No)
- I haven't used it in that way. (No)
- Yes it gets it off your chest. It doesn't raise my stress level, it makes me more aware of the situation. It's nice to write things down, nice to look back. It helps. (Yes)
- Yes I feel better when it's written down because I feel it's written down and therefore it will have an effect. (Yes)
- Yes it helps to talk it through. (Yes)
- It helps defuse stress because it's a safety valve. It's a useful device. (Yes)
- It's helped me work out what is causing me stress and now it's helping me devise coping strategies. It also helps to talk things through with a sympathetic listener and the log gives me the framework within which to do that. (Yes)

Review session 2

- Not applicable this time because I haven't used the log. (No)
- Yes the log book and the project indicate a concern and some people feel a need for it. (Yes)
- It concentrates the mind to get things done and it helps me to confront people with problems that need solving. (Yes)
- I suppose so but it would be easy to exaggerate this. It does help to some extent. (Yes)
- Using the log book hasn't helped really, it's just reflections on the situation. (No)
- I haven't used it since December. (No)

- Yes I think it has helped. It seems to be frustrating things that I have written down. Also the knowledge that it will be passed on to you may be useful in the long-term. (Yes)
- I'm not sure. I found reading the first entries quite painful. I was quite depressed after the first review session. It was like scratching a wound. (No)
- It enhances stress to think I haven't done it – but when I'm actually doing it I find it de-stressing through the confessional aspect. (Yes)
- No I didn't use it. (No)
- I haven't used it. (No)
- Yes I think it clarified the position and brought out the strands which focuses attention on the cause even if I can't do anything about it. (Yes)
- I think I have some stress now. At least the log helped me see the humour, the bizarre – I use it as a distancing device. (Yes)
- I don't know. I've been too busy to use it. (No)
- I feel almost guilty at not being as stressed as I used to be. The log has helped by enabling me to see ways in which to deal with stress. I wait until I feel slightly calmer. Doing it is a form of stress management. It's contained, discrete. (Yes)
- I haven't kept it. (No)
- Yes, sometimes it helps. It's a way of relieving stress. I feel I can write something I cannot say. (Yes)
- I'm still not using it. (No)
- Yes it's a reflecting mechanism. (Yes)
- I'm not using the log book. (No)
- No, the log book's not kept. (No)
- There's too much stress for me to find time to keep the log book. (No)
- I get stress from being a perfectionist and from other people. I suppose the log book has helped. (Yes)
- Not particularly. (No)

- In that it takes a little time to do it can add to my stress but I'm feeling under-resourced timewise. (No)
- Yes there's a cumulative effect in that by noticing patterns over time I've been able to adopt coping strategies. (Yes)

Cue: Perception of the contribution of the log book activity to your role as a change agent and to the management of change generally

Review session 1

- Recently no change to manage other than managing myself in a period of change. This might shift in the next month or two because there will be something to manage. (No)
- I'm quite conservative, an 'agent for stability' yet it has given me lots of ideas for positive change, for me to be an 'agent of improvement'. I'm using it as a tool at the micro, tactical level. (Yes)
- Monitoring individual perceptions, recording the process of activity should help in planning and anticipating change. Planning isn't creating an irrevocable framework. (Yes)
- Yes, but it's hard to identify how much because the log has been grafted onto a situation which would have happened anyway. (Yes)
- I can't say it hasn't contributed through a clarification process but there's obviously a lot more to managing change. There's a danger of thinking that because you've expressed it, others have also. There can be a problem when managers experience a major development of thinking while going through the process of decision-making and then assume others have the same perspective. They haven't, it hits them cold and they feel alienated. (Yes)
- It's marginal. If the log book wasn't there it wouldn't matter terribly much. (No)
- Only in as much as it might be clarifying things through writing as against thinking but it's very fringe. I don't consciously go back over it. (Yes)
- It's acted as a catalyst, a focus. It's helped in thinking in a flow, constructively about what I can do. (Yes)

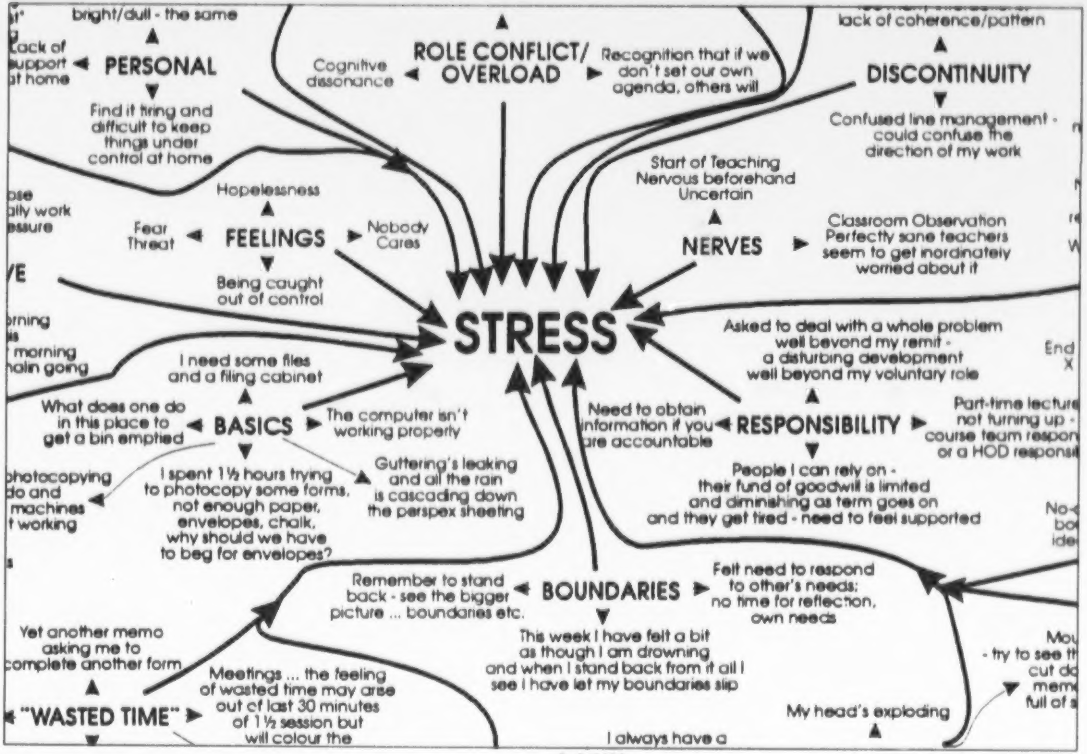
- Yes it has contributed, I can go back to the log book for good ideas to address later. The process of reflection helps me see how I might influence the culture. If enough people do small things we can change it. (Yes)
- I suppose it has contributed. I'm able to tell you what I have in my log book and you are able to contribute to change. (Yes)
- There's a vast difference between thoughts and language. Language tends to slow you down when you convert thoughts into speech/ written works. My mind races ahead and the log book could slow it down. But thoughts without communication, a product, are incestuous. (No)
- Minimum contribution in relation to changing the college but there's been a large effect personally because of the insights gained. (Yes)
- I don't honestly know. (No)
- Not yet. (No)
- It's contributed to a change in my attitude, from looking at change academically as a victim of it to looking at the management of change as a change agent, how to effect it. (Yes)
- Only in the sense that I use myself as an instrument of change and the log book helps me. (Yes)
- Yes I think it has because I can reflect on it now whereas if I hadn't kept the log book I'd have forgotten things. It highlights different areas of change. (Yes)
- It hasn't because I haven't used it. (No)
- Having the book has made me write ideas down – one of the first things I used it for was for a page of ideas and thoughts, logged but not yet taken forward. (Yes)
- I haven't used it. (No)
- I don't believe so. (No)
- My job's changing all the time, bits are just added. I'm not sure how the log book links to this. (No)
- I don't think so really. (No)

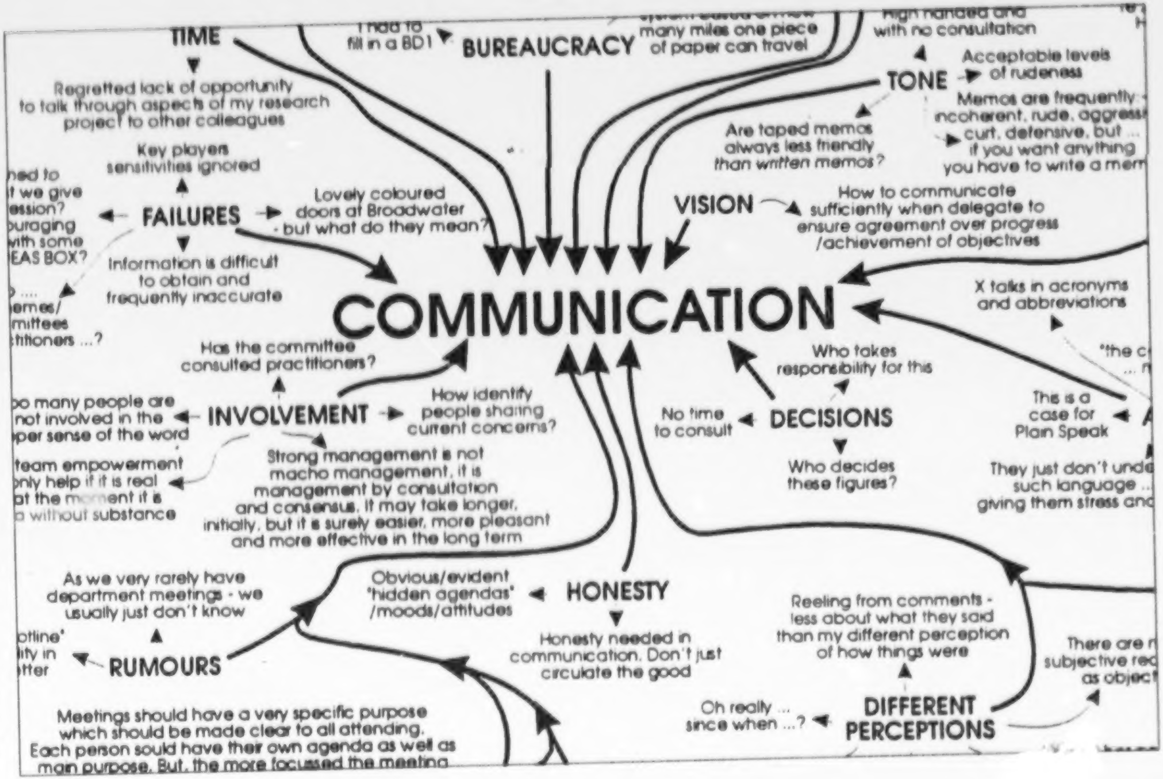
- Not so far. (No)
- Yes, nothing happened for five weeks but then, so desperate to put something in it, I started thinking. It also helps through the feedback sessions. (Yes)
- It's helped me reflect, stand back and see change as a more holistic process, to find the patterns. On a micro level I've logged things I've noticed to analyse later. (Yes)

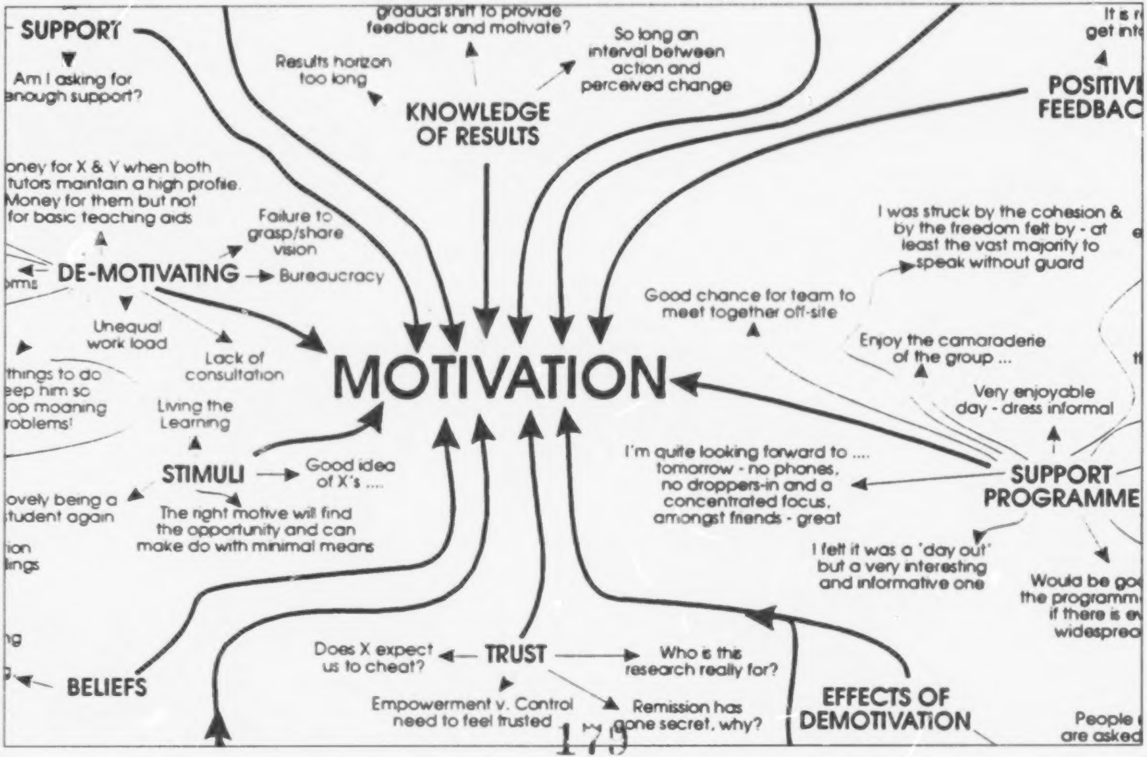
Review session 2

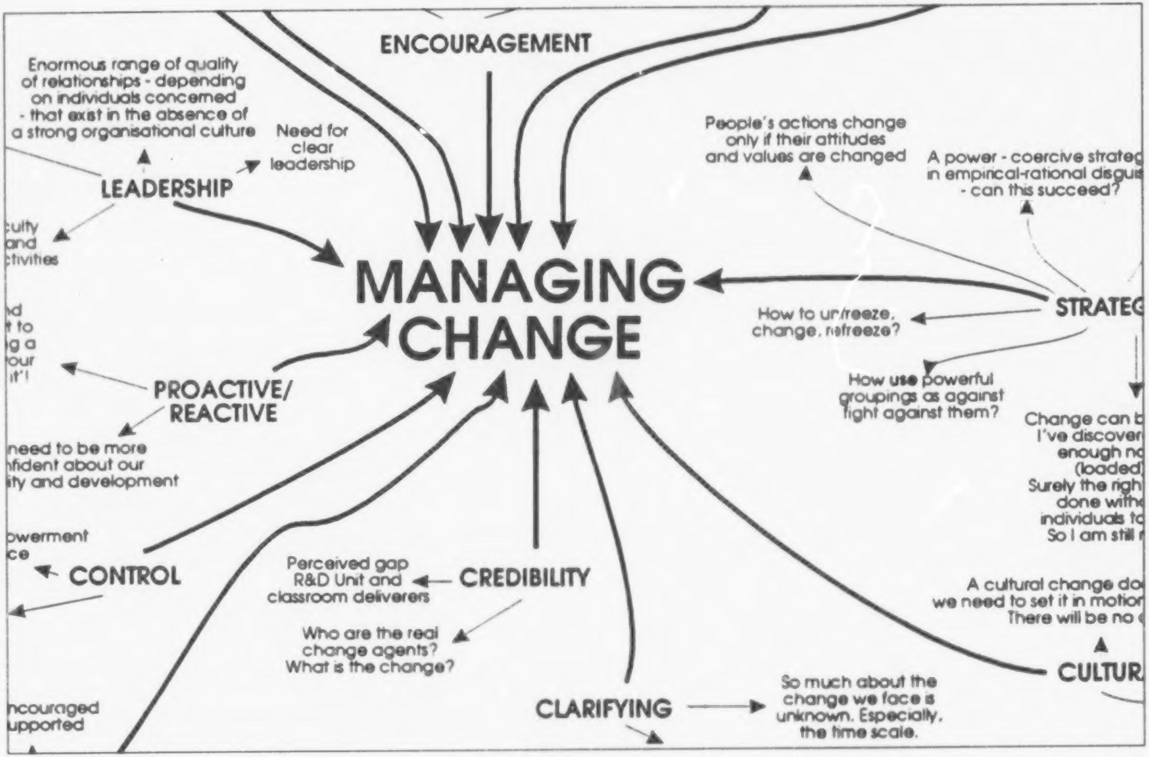
- Not applicable this time. (No)
- I haven't used it at all since the last meeting. (No)
- It helps because I need to monitor what happens, to get feedback in order to manage change more effectively. Things happen through people. (Yes)
- Yes I'm conscious of the fact that change is the focusing point and it helps me to focus on some issues occasionally. (Yes)
- It's chicken and egg but there's still an element of getting off my chest/crystallising. It helps me to marshal thoughts, to focus. (Yes)
- Not applicable now. (No)
- It's had very little influence on the college's management of change. (No)
- Yes, the way it records rights of passage makes it an interesting document. It's all a question of movement. (Yes)
- It's helped in establishing a common identity – 'change agents have log books'. (Yes)
- No, I haven't kept it. (No)
- I don't know whether it would have done if I'd kept it. (No)
- It's made me frustrated, total frustration, because the log book has shown me that I'm unable to change anything that affects anyone apart from me. I can only change my delivery in the classroom. (No)
- Only in that what I'm doing is recording what I want to change – all negative things which I want to do something about. (Yes)

- I haven't had time to use it. (No)
- It has contributed but we need to establish a norm to put the log book into perspective. Anger levels are higher elsewhere. (Yes)
- I haven't kept the log book. (No)
- Not really. (No)
- I'm still not keeping it. (No)
- Yes through a reflecting mechanism. (Yes)
- I'm not using the log book. (No)
- I've been too busy to keep the log book. (No)
- I've not used it this term. (No)
- No I don't think so. (No)
- It's been profitably used to manage change in the way I work. (Yes)
- Yes it's contributed because by telling you, by making it public, I'm hoping it might cause change. I can't put these ideas in a memo and it's pointless spreading them in the staff room so it's lovely to be able to bounce them off, to have someone to tell them to. (Yes)
- It still helps by helping me collect ideas, observations, insights which I can fit into a larger picture later as part of planning change itself or strategies for managing it. (Yes)

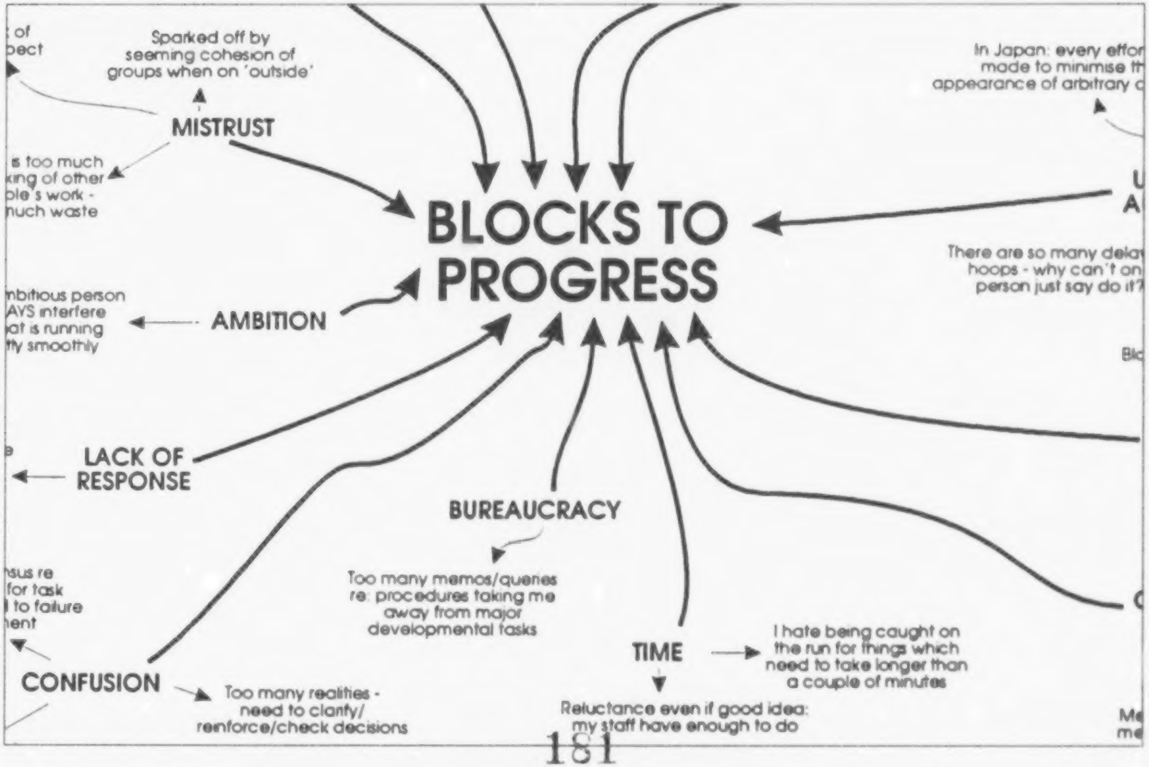

STRESS
PERSONAL
bright/dull - the same
Lack of support at home
Find it tiring and difficult to keep things under control at home
ROLE CONFLICT/ OVERLOAD
Cognitive dissonance
Recognition that if we don't set our own agenda, others will
DISCONTINUITY
lack of coherence/pattern
Confused line management - could confuse the direction of my work
FEELINGS
Hopelessness
Fear Threat
Nobody Cares
Being caught out of control
NERVES
Start of Teaching Nervous beforehand Uncertain
Classroom Observation Perfectly sane teachers seem to get inordinately worried about it
BASICS
I need some files and a filing cabinet
What does one do in this place to get a bin emptied
The computer isn't working properly
I spent 1½ hours trying to photocopy some forms, not enough paper, envelopes, chalk, why should we have to beg for envelopes?
Guttering's leaking and all the rain is cascading down the perspex sheeting
photocopying do and machines t working
RESPONSIBILITY
Asked to deal with a whole problem well beyond my remit - a disturbing development well beyond my voluntary role
Need to obtain information if you are accountable
Part-time lecture not turning up - course team respon or a HOD responsi
People I can rely on - their fund of goodwill is limited and diminishing as term goes on and they get tired - need to feel supported
BOUNDARIES
Remember to stand back - see the bigger picture ... boundaries etc.
Felt need to respond to other's needs; no time for reflection, own needs
This week I have felt a bit as though I am drowning and when I stand back from it all I see I have let my boundaries slip
I always have a
"WASTED TIME"
Yet another memo asking me to complete another form
Meetings ... the feeling of wasted time may arise out of last 30 minutes of 1½ session but will colour the
My head's exploding
End X
No- bo ide
Mou - try to see th cut do mem full of s
VE
rning morning hain going
se ally work essure


COMMUNICATION
TIME
Regretted lack of opportunity to talk through aspects of my research project to other colleagues
I had to fill in a BD1
BUREAUCRACY
many miles one piece of paper can travel
High handed and with no consultation
TONE
Acceptable levels of rudeness
Memos are frequently: incoherent, rude, aggress curt, defensive, but ... if you want anything you have to write a mem
Are taped memos always less friendly than written memos?
VISION
How to communicate sufficiently when delegate to ensure agreement over progress /achievement of objectives
FAILURES
Key players sensitivities ignored
Lovely coloured doors at Broadwater - but what do they mean?
Information is difficult to obtain and frequently inaccurate
hed to
t we give
ession?
ouraging
with some
EAS BOX?
emes/
mittees
titioners ...?
X talks in acronyms and abbreviations
"the c
... n
This is a case for Plain Speak
They just don't unde such language ... giving them stress and
INVOLVEMENT
Has the committee consulted practitioners?
How identify people sharing current concerns?
oo many people are not involved in the per sense of the word
team empowerment only help if it is real at the moment it is without substance
Strong management is not macho management, it is management by consultation and consensus. It may take longer, initially, but it is surely easier, more pleasant and more effective in the long term
DECISIONS
Who takes responsibility for this
No time to consult
Who decides these figures?
RUMOURS
As we very rarely have department meetings - we usually just don't know
otline'
lity in
tter
Meetings should have a very specific purpose which should be made clear to all attending. Each person sould have their own agenda as well as main purpose. But, the more focussed the meeting
HONESTY
Obvious/evident 'hidden agendas' /moods/attitudes
Honesty needed in communication. Don't just circulate the good
DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS
Reeling from comments - less about what they said than my different perception of how things were
Oh really ... since when ...?
There are r subjective rea as object


SUPPORT
Am I asking for enough support?
gradual shift to provide feedback and motivate?
Results horizon too long
So long an interval between action and perceived change
KNOWLEDGE OF RESULTS
It is r get int
POSITIVE FEEDBAC
oney for X & Y when both tutors maintain a high profile. Money for them but not for basic teaching aids
Failure to grasp/share vision
DE-MOTIVATING
Bureaucracy
orms
Unequal work load
Lack of consultation
things to do eep him sc op moaning roblems!
Living the Learning
STIMULI
Good idea of X's ....
ovely being a tudent again
The right motive will find the opportunity and can make do with minimal means
tion lings
ng
g
BELIEFS
MOTIVATION
I was struck by the cohesion & by the freedom felt by - at least the vast majority to speak without guard
Good chance for team to meet together off-site
Enjoy the camaraderie of the group ...
Very enjoyable day - dress informal
I'm quite looking forward to .... tomorrow - no phones, no droppers-in and a concentrated focus, amongst friends - great
SUPPORT PROGRAMME
I felt it was a 'day out' but a very interesting and informative one
Would be goo the programm if there is ev widesprea
Does X expect us to cheat?
TRUST
Who is this research really for?
Empowerment v. Control need to feel trusted
Remission has gone secret, why?
EFFECTS OF DEMOTIVATION
People are asked



ENCOURAGEMENT
Enormous range of quality of relationships - depending on individuals concerned - that exist in the absence of a strong organisational culture
Need for clear leadership
LEADERSHIP
culty
and
ctivities
MANAGING CHANGE
d
t to
g a
our
it'!
PROACTIVE/ REACTIVE
need to be more
nfident about our
ity and development
owerment
ce
CONTROL
Perceived gap R&D Unit and classroom deliverers
CREDIBILITY
Who are the real change agents? What is the change?
ncouraged
upported
CLARIFYING
So much about the change we face is unknown. Especially, the time scale.
People's actions change only if their attitudes and values are changed
A power - coercive strateg
in empirical-rational disgui
- can this succeed?
STRATEG
How to unfreeze, change, refreeze?
How use powerful groupings as against fight against them?
Change can b
I've discover
enough no
(loaded)
Surely the righ
done withe
individuals to
So I am still
A cultural change do
we need to set it in motion
There will be no
CULTUR


BLOCKS TO PROGRESS
t of
pect
Sparked off by seeming cohesion of groups when on 'outside'
MISTRUST
s too much
king of other
ple's work -
nuch waste
AMBITION
mbitious person
AYS interfere
at is running
tty smoothly
e
LACK OF RESPONSE
nsus re
for task
l to failure
nent
CONFUSION
Too many realities - need to clarify/ reinforce/check decisions
BUREAUCRACY
Too many memos/queries re: procedures taking me away from major developmental tasks
TIME
I hate being caught on the run for things which need to take longer than a couple of minutes
Reluctance even if good idea: my staff have enough to do
In Japan: every effor
made to minimise th
appearance of arbitrary d
U
A
There are so many dela
hoops - why can't on
person just say do it?
Bl
C
Me
me

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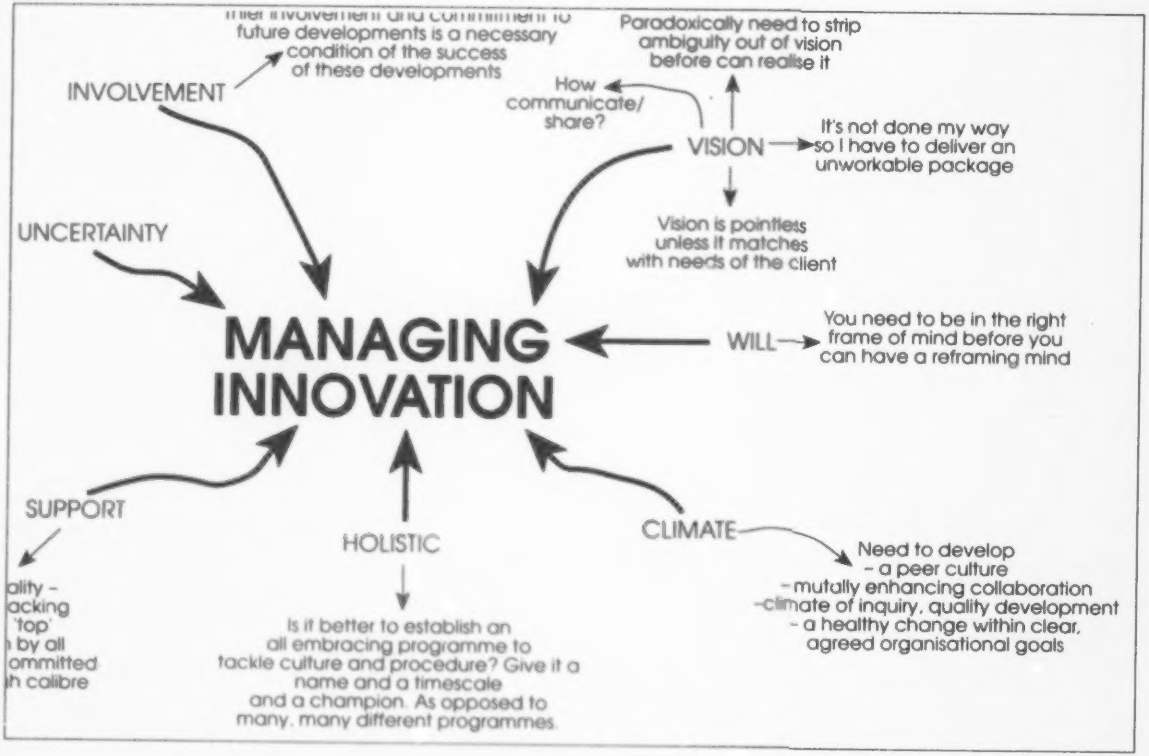


their involvement and commitment to future developments is a necessary condition of the success of these developments

INVOLVEMENT

Paradoxically need to strip ambiguity out of vision before can realise it

How communicate/ share?

VISION

It's not done my way so I have to deliver an unworkable package

Vision is pointless unless it matches with needs of the client

UNCERTAINTY

MANAGING INNOVATION

WILL

You need to be in the right frame of mind before you can have a reframing mind

SUPPORT

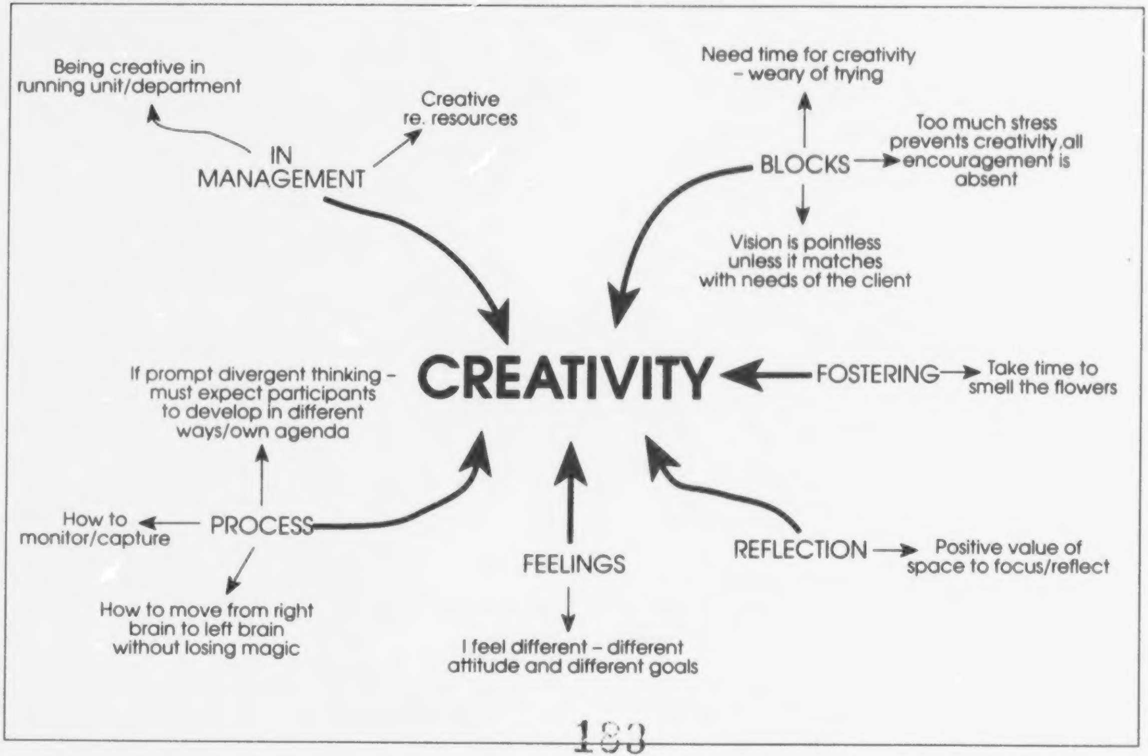
ality -
acking
'top'
by all
ommitted
h calibre

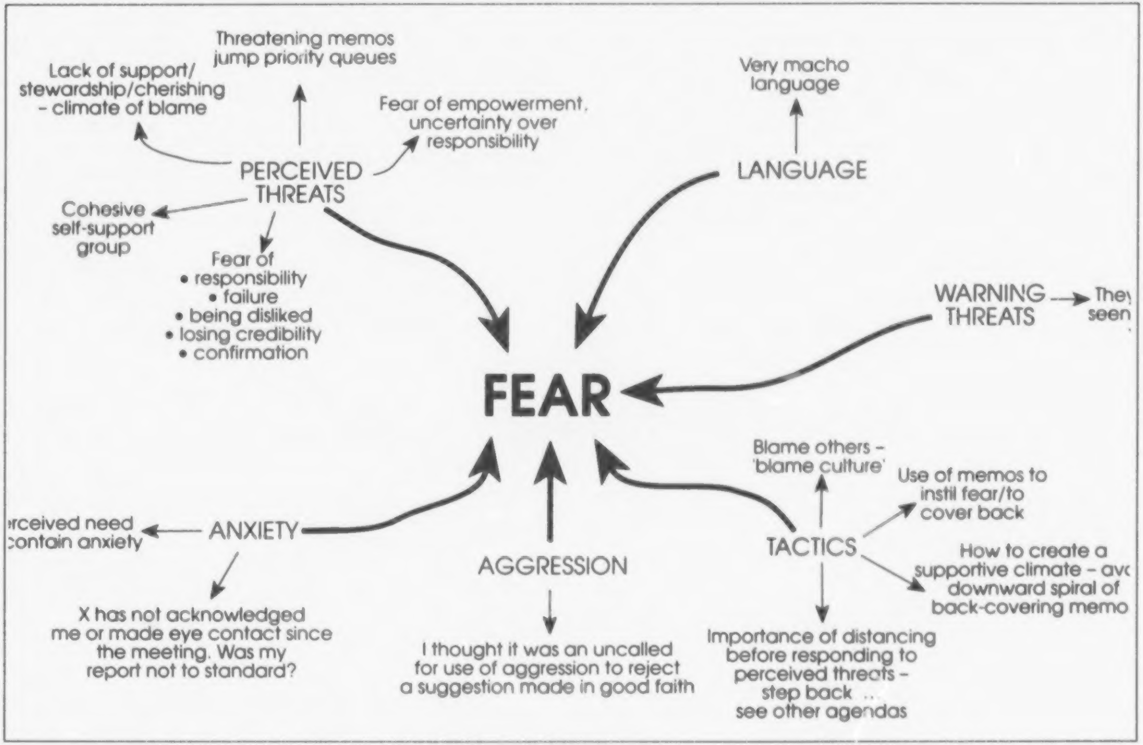
HOLISTIC

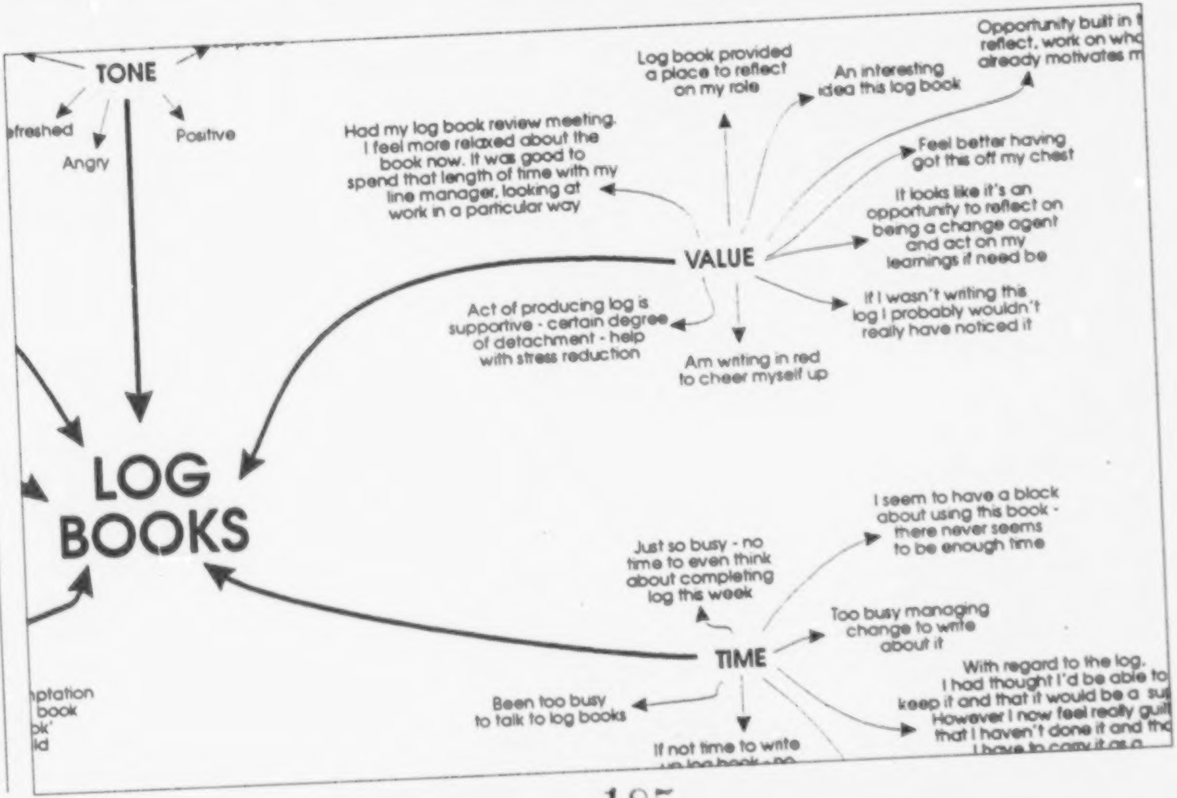
Is it better to establish an all embracing programme to tackle culture and procedure? Give it a name and a timescale and a champion. As opposed to many, many different programmes.

CLIMATE

Need to develop
- a peer culture
- mutally enhancing collaboration
-climate of inquiry, quality development
- a healthy change within clear, agreed organisational goals


CREATIVITY
IN MANAGEMENT
Being creative in running unit/department
Creative re. resources
BLOCKS
Need time for creativity - weary of trying
Too much stress prevents creativity,all encouragement is absent
Vision is pointless unless it matches with needs of the client
FOSTERING
Take time to smell the flowers
PROCESS
If prompt divergent thinking - must expect participants to develop in different ways/own agenda
How to monitor/capture
How to move from right brain to left brain without losing magic
FEELINGS
I feel different - different attitude and different goals
REFLECTION
Positive value of space to focus/reflect


Threatening memos jump priority queues
Lack of support/ stewardship/cherishing - climate of blame
Fear of empowerment, uncertainty over responsibility
PERCEIVED THREATS
Cohesive self-support group
Fear of
• responsibility
• failure
• being disliked
• losing credibility
• confirmation
Very macho language
LANGUAGE
WARNING THREATS
They seen
FEAR
ANXIETY
rceived need contain anxiety
X has not acknowledged me or made eye contact since the meeting. Was my report not to standard?
AGGRESSION
I thought it was an uncalled for use of aggression to reject a suggestion made in good faith
TACTICS
Blame others - 'blame culture'
Use of memos to instil fear/to cover back
How to create a supportive climate - avc downward spiral of back-covering memo
Importance of distancing before responding to perceived threats - step back ... see other agendas


TONE
efreshed
Angry
Positive
LOG BOOKS
VALUE
Had my log book review meeting. I feel more relaxed about the book now. It was good to spend that length of time with my line manager, looking at work in a particular way
Log book provided a place to reflect on my role
An interesting idea this log book
Opportunity built in t reflect, work on wha already motivates m
Feel better having got this off my chest
It looks like it's an opportunity to reflect on being a change agent and act on my learnings if need be
If I wasn't writing this log I probably wouldn't really have noticed it
Act of producing log is supportive - certain degree of detachment - help with stress reduction
Am writing in red to cheer myself up
TIME
I seem to have a block about using this book - there never seems to be enough time
Just so busy - no time to even think about completing log this week
Too busy managing change to write about it
With regard to the log. I had thought I'd be able to keep it and that it would be a su However I now feel really guil that I haven't done it and tha
Been too busy to talk to log books
If not time to write
nptation
book
ok'
ld

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Appendix 3

The voluntary support programme

SUPPORT PROGRAMME RECORD

Please keep a record of your participation, including events which have been facilitated through the programme organised by myself and Liz and those more spontaneous happenings within the network.

Process/activity/event	*Date*	*Reflections/evaluation*

SUPPORT PROGRAMME RECORD

Relationship with colleagues

- Sharing an office with a like-minded colleague, helpful as a 'critical friend'.
- I feel immensely privileged to work with such a strongly supportive group of people.
- A phone call showed interest in my progress, left me feeling good.
- We matter to each other.
- We need to develop a sense of community; it's good to see one's colleagues in a different light or setting.
- I'm not one to need people to support me.
- I know my territory for support.

Team meetings

- Valuable experience, provides support for informal networking.
- Vital, if we are to continue to work as a team.
- Contact with my own team is poor … a regret.
- Invaluable, the only time the team get together without constant interruptions; other viewpoints help and a great deal of guidance is given at our meetings.
- The team would be 'all over the place' without this one hour in the week for important reflections and a feeling of togetherness.
- Consensus that we're doing the right thing.
- Shared acceptance of ideas and processes.
- Sense of engagement.
- Supportive because people can be frank and open, sharing of common problems and successes.
- Gives me confidence to know that eight people were involved and we agreed the issues.
- Pleased to see some targets being set, well organised.

Management processes

- The appraisal scheme will be supportive for staff as a whole.
- My appraisal consultation was motivating.
- I am particularly lucky to work in an environment where I think we are constantly appraising or indeed encouraging each other and at the same time feeling easy about pointing out faults or shortcomings.
- Communication has been improved through the strategic planning process.
- Colleagues were pleased to receive their own copy of the strategic plan summary.
- The total quality team meeting was supportive; I think we learned some valuable information about each other and each other's perceptions. However, it must not just be the management who are involved in high level discussions and decisions … the 'lower archy' need to be heard and moreover need to know they are being listened to as well.
- Supervision helps to stop me from getting burnt out with the work.

Environment

- A lunchtime walk, very cleansing after all the hectic activity.
- It went a bit over my head initially, the environment [a hotel] was a bit intimidating.
- Having an attractive environment is supportive, providing we're not wasting money.
- The idea of putting daffodils around the college is not very real, money should be spent on priorities. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, daffodils come fairly near the bottom.
- I thought the daffodils were a lovely idea – really motivating after the long winter; it felt good that somebody had taken that trouble.
- It helps to get out and walk around the pond at lunchtime.

Research and Development Unit meetings

- Positive encouragement from being able to report on the progress of my research project to the team.
- Interesting to hear about the way other people are doing their research.
- Good feeling of higher work going on, the learning organisation, solidarity.
- Always enjoyable.
- By and large quite interesting.
- Mostly unhelpful.
- Only just beginning to realise that intellectual discussion is supportive, has a relevance; generally my approach is practical.
- Cerebral support is a tremendous factor in influencing how well I'm coping personally with things; it depersonalises the situation.
- It's useful in clarifying thought but I'm not convinced the discussion has moved us all on.
- Not enough 'bite'.
- Participants are more thoughtful in that kind of session as against in staffroom discussion.

Stress management course

- Useful and thought provoking. However, a few months on I seem to have forgotten what we learned and I am not sure whether it has helped me cope with stress.
- Quite fun, learned some useful strategies.
- Good to establish reference points, common ground but in retrospect I've been unable to fulfil most of the good ideas.
- Very useful, not immediately but I notice a big change now in the depth of contact I am able to have with more people.
- On the one hand I applaud the motives in organising this but I feel it's almost immoral for us to spend money mollycoddling ourselves when colleagues are having to cope with such limited resources!

- Sense of unease/reservations re. value for money when meetings/ courses are held off-site.
- Very helpful – this could have been because we were away from college and in lovely surroundings.
- Useful to get away from the normal environment and talk in a non-threatening atmosphere.
- It wasn't specifically helpful because I'm stressed by having more work than I can do.
- Timely and supportive in persuading me to recognise that I have responsibility to manage my own stress.
- Going through it together helped us in team building.

Teaching and management development courses

- Big confidence builder, felt in control of the development.
- The course is supportive in general but not through having a network of people, more through self-motivation.
- It fulfilled a course development need but we need more team building.
- A depressing course – useful finding out the information but I became aware of the limited understanding of the people putting things together.
- A real experience, still learning from it.
- Good to see such a wide cross-section of staff.
- Stimulating, exhausting, valuable, interesting, time-consuming, rewarding, energy-sapping, stressful.
- Very thought provoking, making us much more aware of other people's feelings and looking at certain sets of circumstances from both points of view.

Personal development courses

- Lots of potential for people to get involved – unfortunately not so many participants; felt a little disappointed by this.

- Would like to do more, very supportive.
- Culture and education – a broadening of outlook/horizon.
- It was supportive to feel part of a community of staff and students, sharing the same experiences.
- I didn't feel I could take the time off to go to it; there's so much work to do.
- I never feel I have the time but when I do make the effort and take time out to reflect, learn something new – I feel a different person.
- Attending a meditation course encouraged a wider perspective on things and so reduced my stress.

Log book review sessions

- It has helped me feel I can influence the way things are managed.
- I used the log book with a view to talking the detail through as a support.
- I got very introspective and negative, a wasted opportunity for more positive planning.
- Participation in group discussions on the log book was supportive, it was useful to hear what other people's perceptions were.
- It has been a positive help to me; it's my opportunity to have contact with a person in senior management.
- The log book gives me the opportunity to share what is stressing me with 'critical friends', to distance myself and work out strategies.

Outside college

- I have two cats which encourage me to slow down … and a dog which has led me to undertake much more physical exercise.
- My cats persuade me to observe and experience life from a less agitated, pressured stance.
- Taking my dog for a walk gives me an enforced break … time to reflect.

- Having another area of my life, quite separate from college, where I can relax, switch off and be creative.
- Activities and interests outside college allow me to forget about work/switch off so I come fresh each day; helps to stop me from carrying the stresses and strains home.

REVIEW SESSION INTERVIEW RECORD

Cue: Has your participation in this programme affected your attitude towards change, motivation, perception of stress? If so, in what way?

Review session 1

- Yes, in as much as there is a conscious move towards dealing with the enormous amount of change.
- Yes. A session on interpersonal skills has made me more motivated, more aware of other viewpoints although it also raised my stress level. It can be uncomfortable to be asked to focus on what you're doing.
- Yes I'm more aware of the need to foster spontaneous, mutually supportive, team activity.
- Not in itself.
- It has informed, rather than changed my attitude – it has reinforced some of my views.
- Yes I've recognised that cerebral support can be as participative as other support and also that support isn't something people have to do for you, you can do it for yourself.
- Yes it's been refreshing.
- I'm not sure although one session was valuable I won't follow it up and read. There's a limit to how much I can be interested in. I'm biased against anything that takes me away from my main purpose.
- It has changed my attitude towards stress, I have become more self aware.

- Yes it's all been part of an holistic process.
- It's been motivating even when it's also a pressure.
- Yes it has made my attitude towards change more positive because it's brought into focus the enormous range of change that could occur.

Review session 2

- Yes it has been a positive help to me.
- It has given me a clear focus for managing change.
- Working with 'change agents' who have access to different committees has helped me to network and create a wider cross-college base.
- Yes it's always good to feel you're not alone, to share experiences.
- No, I enjoy that type of activity but I don't perceive a link because I'm self-motivated.
- Yes definitely, it's made me more aware of college processes and put me in touch with more people.
- Yes it has helped me to stand back and reflect.
- It has heightened my consciousness generally and affected other areas of my life.
- Yes the programme and the log have helped me to fit my objectives with the corporate objectives.
- Yes it has refreshed me, given me the opportunity to look at things in a new light, to put emphasis on something new.
- It has helped me break down the compartments I create as a defence mechanism. The events have helped in an holistic way to give me a wider picture of organisational processes and individual activities although at the time they might have felt like an imposition.
- I'm not introspective and my participation hasn't affected my perception. I feel the same now as I did before.
- Yes – it's been most useful. At last I feel connected into the system so I feel I can influence it.

Cue: If you have not participated in the programme, do you believe its existence has had any influence on your attitude towards change, motivation, perception of stress?

Review session 1

- Yes because these issues are 'on the agenda'.
- Yes, any research which looks at the origins of stress and ways of managing it is valuable. It's motivating to know it's happening.
- Unquestionably, the fact that a programme exists which acknowledges the presence of stress and addresses it is supportive regardless of its success or otherwise.
- For some people it might be, others might feel it is part of the 'survival of the favourites'. It could be motivating, a channel for ideas.
- Yes it is motivating to know that an attempt is being made to improve communication and to provide support but it needs the support of the topmost managers.
- I don't know but I feel we ought to be doing something like this. It might seem exclusive, there are others who are also change agents but they've not been involved.
- Yes I have found it helpful being part of the project. Without it I would be like an oil rig suspended and not fixed to the sea bed.
- Not really, some people enjoy belonging to groups and going to meetings. I hate it. I'm not a team player, not a joiner.
- Yes it makes a difference – someone somewhere is making an effort and that means something.
- It might influence people who have not participated but there's a problem of exclusivity.
- Yes the programme in itself is supportive, it has the potential to recognise certain things which are not always taken seriously.
- Yes it is motivating in itself that something is being done, that the need to support is being addressed. This is comforting and reduces stress.
- Not really so far, it's made me think I might be stressed when it hadn't occurred to me.

Review session 2

- Yes it indicates a concern and some people feel a need to participate.
- Yes, I think so. I observe that other people find the programme very valuable. I support whatever it takes to help people get through as long as it doesn't disturb the equilibrium of others.
- No, I don't seek support or share problems with colleagues.
- I'm not sure – initially there was goodwill and interest but there haven't been any tangible results yet so there's a risk of demotivation.
- Yes the fact that the college is organising things to do with stress management makes me feel supported but there are undercurrents; some people see us as a clique of insiders.

Appendix 4

Managing change: the way forward – elite sample summary proposals

Ref 1

Cue: How can we manage change effectively, both in terms of motivating the people involved and achieving productive outcomes?

The challenge identified

There is a need for efficiency of operation but this presents a particular challenge in relation to motivating staff to be proactive about change when some of them see the drive for efficiency as part of an anti-culture.

Observations

- staff can be demotivated where there is insufficient recognition from managers of the value of what they do.
- Some feel threatened from new monitoring procedures.
- Some have been affected by frequent reorganisation of their department.
- Perceived limited opportunities for promotion demotivate.
- It is definitely easier to maintain motivation in a rapidly changing institution if you feel that you are part of the change, not that it is being done to you.

Suggested way forward

- Make explicit what is meant by professional role, perhaps through a code of practice.
- Motivate through appraisal interviews carried out well and turned into action.
- Write maintaining staff morale into line managers job descriptions.
- Positive feedback and recognition from senior management as well as immediate line managers.
- Dialogue between managers and staff.
- Keeping people informed through written updates.
- TQM approaches with middle and senior managers giving serious consideration to how they serve their staff as customers.
- Address the particular circumstances and needs of part-time staff.
- Induct staff who change roles within the college.

Framework

Investors in People, total quality management, staff appraisal.

Learning circles

Communication process development, management development programme.

Ref 2

Cue: communication between the broader view and the detailed view.

The challenge identified

Major changes are taking place and the implications are not really understood at the operational level.

Observations

- Visions are not shared throughout the organisation.
- At the strategic level it is difficult to obtain a clear vision because so much is going on: there are problems with clarity, consultation, communicating the wider picture.
- At the tactical level there are problems with understanding and

interpretation, planning, target setting, communication.

- At the operational level there are problems with planning, decision making and organising and denial of responsibility.
- At all levels there is a need for increased skill at envisioning, creating pictures that can be communicated and worked towards.

Suggested way forward

- In the broader context – Investors in People entailing briefings and training, total quality management and management dvelopment.
- In the narrower context – champions for symbols and images, envisioning, feeling and persuasion, commitment.
- Support for teams, involving greater contact with middle management.
- Staff development to follow up major events.

Framework

Investors in People, total quality management.

Learning circles

Management development programme, communication process development, corporate values dissemination, team empowerment programme.

Ref 3

Cue: to manage change one has to be sensitive to the fact that organisational culture is not a single perspective; it is multi-faceted and different people will quite properly have different facets.

The challenge identified

Each individual member of the organisation is likely to have a unique perception of the organisation, and different priorities for his/her own contribution to its success, but this does not imply different degrees of commitment. However, it is hardly surprising that individuals coming from quite different directions may misinterpret each others' intentions.

Observations

- Great majority of obstacles and aggravations are to do with perceptions.

- A main thrust in the management of change has to concern itself with the clarification of perspectives.

Suggested way forward

- Clarify perspectives.
- Identify short-term targets with relevant goals.
- Identify all the reasons for them.
- Provide support – resources, allies, morale.
- Minimise obstacles by identifying conflicting goals, negotiating, explaining, working round.
- Reward – take trouble to review, acknowledge success.

Framework

Investors in People, staff appraisal.

Learning circles

Communication process development, management development programme.

Ref 4
Cue: college ethos and management style

The challenge identified

Incorporation has resulted in a massive increase in the volume of decisions required of college leaders. This is exacerbated by the more rapid pace of decision-making.

Observations

- Senior managers, promoted from middle management may find difficulty in shedding old duties and assuming institutional, strategic outlook.
- Stress generated by volume, pace and novelty of decision results in a tendency towards establishment of inward-looking seige mentality senior management teams.
- Middle managers experience different pressures and may feel disempowered and frightened.

- Non-managerial staff perceive major decisions being made inside the college and at national level with apparently little reference to them.

Suggested way forward

- Close the gap between the cultures of senior managers and the managed through creating a sense of belonging, ownership and shared purpose.
- To inform planning – conduct a series of structured interviews with different sections of staff within college.

Framework

Investors in People, staff appraisal.

Learning circles

Communication process development, management development programme, corporate values dissemination.

Ref 5

Cue: what do you perceive as the main causes/effects of stress in the organisation. How can we stimulate creativity and innovation? How are colleagues motivated?

The challenge identified

A combination of external pressure, work overload and internal management processes has led to negative stress resulting in reduced creativity and innovation and lowered motivation.

Observation

- Staff perceive that more is expected of them as student numbers increase and other members of staff leave.
- An increase in administrative tasks is seen cutting into teaching time, reducing quality.
- There is a felt need for increased secretarial support.
- The requirement for new courses and curriculum development imposes an additional burden.

- The effects of resulting stress include low morale, insecurity, fear, distrust, a sense of powerlessness, absenteeism, depression.

Suggested way forward

- Provide time for reflection.
- Consult and use members' expertise.
- Reward contributors to the change process by involving them in decision making.
- Keep staff informed, encourage debate, allow dissent.

Framework

Investors in People, total quality management.

Learning circles

Fostering reflection, team empowerment programme, communication process development.

Ref 6

Cue: staff feel unsupported and some staff feel very put upon and they feel it's unfair

The challenge identified

There are areas within the college where some support staff feel unsupported; a consequence of this is that the level of commitment is low and quality is not a key issue.

Observations

- There have been instances where the same members of staff are continually asked to 'help out', often out of normal working hours whereas others are never asked.
- This leads to some staff feeling they are being penalised for doing a job well.
- Some secretaries spend a lot of time copy typing.

Suggested way forward

- Link staff appraisal to merit awards.
- Set up centralised copy typing centre.
- Carry out sickness and office environment surveys; improve staff work and relaxation areas.
- Introduce new staff to all the college sites.
- Encourage and enable support staff to attend staff development events.
- Hold occasional morale boosters like college dances.

Framework

Staff appraisal, health and welfare promotion.

Learning circles

Staff welfare programme, environment enhancement programme.

Ref 7

Cue: time accounting as a motivator – memo style in relation to good communication

The challenge identified

There is a need to identify performance indicators and a means of recording for jobs which involve a considerable amount of 'unseen' work. Sometimes memos are perceived to be hostile and are responded to similarly.

Observations

- A time log is helpful when the major part of work entails interaction with colleagues.
- Straight, impersonal memos do not always elicit the required response.
- Memos can induce stress.
- Memos are sometimes used as weapons.
- 'Well done' memos are appreciated.

Suggested way forward

- Encourage relevant colleagues to keep a time log as a motivator and an aid to communication within a team.
- Use full name, without title as memo house style.
- Encourage the sending of appreciative memos, including upwards.
- Use straightforward accessible language with as little jargon as possible.

Framework

Investors in People

Learning circles

Communication process development.

Ref 8
Cue: staff welfare support: what's not there and what's needed

The challenge identified

Some direct cues suggest that more support for staff is needed. Counselling, as a second level support, should be viewed in a larger context with other management systems in place first, to act as a buffer.

Observations

- Staff use the counselling and welfare unit to talk through personal and work issues.
- Staff counsellors would need to be less visible, less involved in the organisation than the student counsellors or there could be role conflict.

Suggested way forward

- First ensure that there is an effective, supportive management infrastructure in place offering regular supervision, appraisals and training.
- Establish an occupational health service for managers to consult re. staff long-term and intermittent sickness.

- Maintaining confidentiality the service could provide feedback on trends and needs.
- Provide limited first line counselling support for staff with the possibility of referral to an external counsellor.
- The counselling service, maintaining individual confidentiality, could provide feedback to management on what is happening within the college.
- Not making the decisions themselves the counsellors could take care of staff affected by the consequences of organisational decisions.
- An occupational health service could act as a filter referring staff to the counsellor.
- A shared vision is needed between senior management, personnel, occupational health and the staff counselling service.

Framework

Health and welfare promotion, staff appraisal.

Learning circles

Management development programme, staff welfare programme.

Appendix 5

Literature survey

The fields of change, innovation and stress management have each generated extensive bodies of empirical studies and interpretive commentary. The following review does not aim to be comprehensive. The intention is to highlight theories and findings which have particular relevance for this investigation.

THE MANAGEMENT OF INNOVATION AND CHANGE

Defining the concepts

Within the domain of management studies change management usually denotes the promotion, facilitation and control of strategic organisational change. The descriptor strategic is usually assumed to entail significant change championed and controlled by senior management, although some (Buchanan and Boddy, 1992, for example) argue for a more relativistic definition. Johnson (1987) distinguishes between a rationalist, an adaptive and an interpretive view of the strategic management process; Johnson and Scholes (1993) present strategy as the outcome of social, political and cultural processes within the organisation. A number of writers (Mintzberg and Waters, 1989, for example) perceive strategy as occupying a position on a continuum between emergent and deliberate or planned. Pettigrew *et al.* (1992) distinguish between strategy and policy, defining strategy in terms of a greater concern with securing action. Such differences in perception surrounding the concept strategic management have contributed to variations in models of change.

The literature on change management rarely makes explicit reference to innovation although there is usually evidence of an implicit assumption that proactive change will entail creativity and novelty. Rickards (1985) defines innovation in terms of the management and organisational qualities and processes required to achieve it. Henry (1991) regards innovation as the process through which creative ideas are realised as tangible products. Mintzberg (1991) suggests that right brain, creative, activity is associated with relational, holistic planning processes and is most relevant to the work of senior managers. Creative management processes and innovation are usually linked in the literature on organisational culture and structure. Peters and Waterman (1982), Kanter (1985) and Miller (1989) identify specific characteristics of innovative organisations. The stance I have adopted for the current research is phenomenological, with innovation defined in terms of the degree of novelty perceived by those experiencing the change.

The concept of the change agent is central to this investigation. The literature is consistent in ascribing a proactive leadership role to change agents although there is less agreement over their likely status and position in the hierarchy and the competences they require to perform the role effectively.

Models of change

Within the literature models of change are inextricably linked with models of organisation. Carnall (1990) reviews the literature linking organisational design with effectiveness. He refers to the seminal work of theorists such as Burns and Stalker (1961), Woodward (1965) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1968) who suggest that mechanistic bureaucratic structures, relying on formal procedures and job specialisation, may impede change. Carnall (1990) and Morgan (1986) refer to refinements made to contingency theory to take account of variations between sub-environments within organisations. Lorsch (1970), for example, suggests that structure is amenable to change by managers who can exercise considerable choice over its component variables. The Likert Profile of Organisational Characteristics employed within this investigation (Chapter 5) revealed an awareness by the change agents of different organisational structures and styles within the college. Carnall and Morgan also review the criticisms of contingency theory, one of which maintains that structures often result from bargaining and compromise within an environment which by virtue of its problematic nature cannot be taken as a determinant of the organisation. Kanter (1985) distinguishes between segmentalist and integrative organisations equating to the mechanistic and organic forms described by Burns and Stalker (1961). Within her model, segmentalist companies approach new problems in a fragmented manner whereas the more successful, integrative, companies adopt an holistic approach. Bennis (1969) suggests that adhocracies, based on temporary project teams are likely to be more successful than bureaucratic structures in a turbulent environment. Morgan (1986) perceives a common recommendation within contingency and organisational ecology theories that organisations for whom innovation is a priority should aim for flexible, project-oriented matrix or organic structures. Buchanan and Boddy (1992) link the expertise and required competences of change agents to the organisational environment within which they operate. Citing the distinction made by Butler (1991) between crisp and fuzzy structures and the studies of McCaskey (1988) and Obeng (1990), they conclude that increased environmental turbulence has led to the development of organic, fuzzy, fluid, adaptable and flexible organisational structures. Within their model of change those involved in planning should diagnose the position of their organisation and of sections within it along a continuum from rigid to fuzzy modes of operation before selecting their approach.

Wilson (1992) challenges such models which he regards as the current dominant theory-in-use in British and American organisational change literature. He rejects their emphasis on planned change achieved through managers trained in specific techniques and criticises the normativism implicit in the attribution of organisational success to the ability to handle strategic change. The complexity and interdependency of the relationships between change processes arising from interactions within the external and internal environments of the organisation, and those which can be linked to the deliberate interventions of change agents, is a theme running through the literature. Fullan (1991) refers to a tension or dilemma within the literature on educational change as differing emphasis is laid on the 'fidelity' or 'mutual adaptation' perspective. Pettigrew *et al.* (1992), drawing on the National Health Service as an example service sector context, argue that concepts derived from the private sector should not be mechanistically applied to a different sector thereby ignoring differences in the degree of politicization, power and the social position of professionals. They criticise what they term the ahistorical, aprocessual and acontextual character of much research.

Buchanan and Boddy (1992) explore criticisms of the rational-linear model of change and suggest that such models should not be dismissed without recognition of the symbolic function of apparently rational planned change processes in legitimising the actions of the change agent while sustaining the 'myth of organizational rationality'. They picture the change agent negotiating, selling and manipulating perceptions of context, acting to legitimize change proposals within Johnson's (1990) model of symbolic sequence where symbolic acts signify stages from unfreezing through to refreezing.

Change models convey explicit and implicit messages regarding leadership style and role. Wilson (1992) questions the emphasis on leadership which he believes to be based on an erroneous assumption that organisational change can best be explained by reference to the cognitive actions of managers (voluntarism) as against the forces of economics, environment and context (determinism). Carnall (1990), considering whether it is possible to identify key elements of effective leadership, refers to a number of studies noting practical guidance but little empirical research.

Despite the diversity of theories and perspectives there are recurrent themes, recommendations and caveats within the literature which are relevant for this investigation. Emergent theories of change are a reminder not to overestimate the efficacy of planned change. If individual change agents perceive themselves as possessing greater influence than is feasible given their role and context they are likely to experience frustration and increased stress through a perceived shortfall in anticipated control and achievement. Attention drawn to the significance of the symbolism of rational-linear approaches to planned change supports the decision within this investigation to link the developments championed and supported by the change agents to established systemic frameworks such as staff appraisal and Investors in People.

The meaning of change

Fullan (1991) places the 'problem of meaning' at the centre of the struggle to understand change contending that neglect of the phenomenology of change, how people actually experience it as against how it was intended, is the reason why many social reforms fail. He warns of false clarity which occurs when people think they have changed but when they have only assimilated the superficial trappings of the new practice and of painful unclarity experienced when the conditions surrounding the change do not support the development of subjective meaning. At stake are individuals' occupational identity, sense of competence and self-concept. Lightall (1973) cited by Fullan presents a warning to decision-makers which is still relevant and resonates with the experience of the Northbrook change agents two decades later:

> The tendency is widespread for problem solvers to jump from their private plans to public implementation of those plans without going through the (number of realities) necessary to fashion them in accordance with problems felt by the adult humans whose energy and intelligence are needed to implement the plans.
> (Fullan 1991, quoting Lightall)

There are implications here for the role of change agents within the communication process; acting as links between 'realities' they should perhaps be viewed as 'agents of meaning'. Morgan (1986) presents a detailed examination of images of organisation, highlighting the creation of meaning through metaphor and emphasising the challenges and dilemmas for the change agent. Carnall (1990) suggests that individuals have four main categories of need if they are to rebuild self esteem following an experience of change: the need for intelligible information; the need to develop new skills; the need for support to help deal with the problems; and the need for empathy. He presents a five-stage model of coping based on the work of Vries and Miller (1984) and Adams (1977). Within his exploration he makes a number of observations which are particularly relevant for this investigation. Under the stage he labels 4 – adaptation – he observes that having ensured that the right training and support are available managers should stay in the background and allow the people who are directly involved to make it work, thus enabling them to develop the skills and understanding needed to secure long-term effectiveness. This advice highlights some of the tensions implicit within the process of team empowerment identified as a way forward in this investigation. Such an approach requires that managers have a sufficiently high level of confidence and self esteem to enable them to establish an appropriate balance of control, support and trust. The recommendations related to management development arising from this investigation are made with a view to addressing needs heightened by these tensions.

Planned change

Acting within the dynamic environment formed through the interplay of planned and emergent forces the change agent is likely to meet resistance from the organisation itself, even where changes are championed at the most senior level. Fullan (1991) refers to the capacity of organisations to resist change observing that the forces reinforcing the status quo are systemic. It is an underlying assumption of this investigation that forces for change can also be systemic, hence the identification of organisational frameworks and management processes such as Investors in People, TQM and staff appraisal as agents for change.

Buchanan and Boddy (1992), concerned with support for individual change agents, suggest that the agenda priorities of the change agent will depend on the context which will in turn vary on a number of dimensions, particularly with regard to the 'personal vulnerability' of the change agent. They present a four quadrant model within which change agents are likely to be most vulnerable and experience the greatest hassle in quadrant four where change is perceived to affect the organisation's core activity and where it is seen as a radical departure from existing practice. The significance of the model for this research relates to issues of training and support. Buchanan and Boddy, for example, infer that management development programmes for change agents should take account of the influence of context on strategies. They review the advice of management theorists such as Kanter (1984) who identifies a set of change architect skills and Keen (1985) who lists strategies for counter and for counter-counter implementation and conclude that the expertise of the change agent cannot be expressed or understood without reference to the process of change and to the context. From this they infer that the competences needed to manage change will in turn depend upon the context.

Pettigrew *et al.* (1992) pose the question why does the rate and pace of change differ across different localities? They detect a theme of differential receptivity within the literature on innovation. Kanter (1984, 1989) stresses the contribution of the structure and culture of the organisation to innovative managerial activity. Morgan (1986) highlights the covert influence of information system design allied to overt influence of structures to control and facilitate decision-making. Carnall (1990) suggests that most work cannot be accomplished without the support of an informal communication network and refers to studies which indicate that managers prefer informal and verbal communication and spend around 45 per cent of their time communicating outside the formal authority structure. The evident opportunities for managers to energise and, regrettably, to enervate, sharpen the debate on the need to establish flexible, credible and, particularly in the present resource climate, cost effective management systems. Buchanan and Boddy (1992) highlight this need when they cite evidence to support their claim that implementation failures are more likely to be due to organisational and managerial than to technical problems. A study carried out by Alexander (1989) supports this claim: 93 private sector firms were surveyed to determine which implementation problems occurred most frequently as they attempted to put strategic decisions into effect. The 10 most frequently occurring problems are overwhelmingly managerial.

The learning organisation

The concept of the learning organisation encapsulates the dominant strands of organisational development theory. In a recent review of the literature and practice related to the concept Jones and Hendry (1992) choose a 'working' definition from Pedler *et al.* (1988):

> A learning organisation is one which facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself.
> (Pedler *et al.* 1988)

This reverberates with the continuous improvement process associated with TQM and disaggregated leadership where peer coaching and mentoring are emphasised rather than top management charisma.

Jones and Hendry acknowledge the contribution to the concept of the work of Argyris and Schon (1978) on learning, Morgan (1983, 1986) and Revans (1982) on action learning and of Pettigrew (1974, 1985) and Pettigrew and Whipp (1991) on organisational learning, corporate culture and change strategies. The different definitions available in the literature illustrate the varying emphases within the concept. They offer a list of key themes, which include transformation, participation, innovation, altering the way people work, adapting, management style, delegation and fostering employee involvement.

They cite an Ashridge report by Barham *et al.* (1988) with regard to its perception of learning organisations as those where training and personal development contribute to an integrated, continuous process of learning rather than functioning as bolt-on discrete activities. The process of staff development within the Investors in People framework is put forward within this investigation as a mechanism to facilitate such an approach.

The transformation implicit within the learning organisation concept suggests a need for cultural change. Carnall (1990) emphasises the need to create a change supportive environment within which managers encourage positive attitudes to change and create conditions for effective problem solving. Jones and Hendry (1992) cite the research of Hayes *et al.* (1988) drawing attention to its conclusion that the most successful manufacturing operations adopt a 'people first' approach to organisational development. Their list of nine key hallmarks or assumptions about creating a learning organisation stress respect for employees, high expectations of achievement allied to individual empowerment, co-operative teamwork and peer support. The concept of the learning organisation involves a willingness on the part of managers not only to encourage peer support and learning but to learn from their staff.

Quinn (1989) suggests that managers should tap the collective wit of their organisation by forcing initial thinking down to the lower levels of the hierarchy. Fullan (1991) stresses the significance of peer relationships in organisational learning, particularly at the implementation stage. Carnall (1990) develops a model he terms the change equation which links motivation to clarity of purpose and access to information and posits that for change to be owned and successfully implemented the energy for change will need to be greater than the perceived costs of making the change. He recommends reality testing as a means to energise those involved in implementation. Through a process of open challenging staff have the opportunity to develop an understanding of new ideas, to learn and ultimately to feel committed. Pettigrew *et al.* (1992) suggest that an organisation's ability to learn may be linked to the development of a general theory of action which can be applied to different learning situations. They caution that organisations appear to experience difficulty in this and cite Hedberg (1981) who suggests that organisations frequently know less than their members, particularly when rapid changes in the environment overload the communication networks. Morgan (1986) explores the kind of learning which may be involved in organisational development. He distinguishes between single-loop and double-loop learning. It is the latter, involving self-questioning, learning to learn and self organising which is usually regarded as the hallmark of the learning organisation. Morgan suggests that bureaucratic approaches to organisation make it difficult to facilitate double-loop learning, partly as a result of fragmentation. He also refers to the distinction made by Argyris and Schon (1974) between espoused theory and theory in use pointing to a gap between what people say and what they do as another barrier to double-loop learning. Without double-loop learning established myths and mind sets are likely to remain unchallenged. Johnson (1990) recommends that questioning be build into the management system so as to avoid 'within-paradigm atrophy of strategy'.

The learning organisation portrayed here is one where innovative attitudes and abilities permeate all parts and where innovation depends upon the ability to self-organise. Morgan (1986) warns that unless an organisation develops in this way and thereby changes itself to accommodate the ideas it generates and values it is likely to block its own innovations.

Breaking this self-defeating cycle entails changing attitudes, particularly at senior and middle management level. Jones and Hendry (1992) emphasise that the concept of the learning organisation is in itself a challenge. It dares organisations not just to act differently but to think differently. The recommendations from this investigation are formulated to foster a climate within which such a self-aware and self-challenging organisation can evolve. Systems development and intervention are suggested as vehicles to achieve this. Jones and Hendry pose the question whether the learning organisation concept is simply a 'vision propounded by management and educational idealists' or an ideal capable of reality. I would suggest that it is less important to discover whether the pursuit of the learning organisation is the pursuit of a chimera than to experience the development process the pursuit entails. It may be that an organisation which perceives itself to have achieved the status of a learning organisation is confusing the journey with the destination. It is the journey which is significant and which is signalled by the epithet 'learning'. A true learning organisation will never wish to end the journey.

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

Defining the concepts

The concept of stress is used inconsistently in the literature. Recognising this, Cohen and Wills (1985) offer a working definition linked to their exploration of social support and the buffering hypothesis. This posits that stress arises when a person appraises a situation as threatening or otherwise demanding and does not have an appropriate coping response; feelings of helplessness and possible loss of self-esteem are likely to follow. The work of Lazarus (1966) and Lazarus and Launier (1978) is acknowledged as the basis for this definition. Shipley and Orlans (1988) also cite Lazarus and Launier emphasising the value of conceptualising stress as a dynamic social process within which stress depends upon individuals evaluating their relationship with the environment as potentially harmful. They do, however, caution that this approach may draw attention away from the environment as a source of stress which is amenable to change. Their suggested way forward is a combination of the phenomenological view of stress with what they term a 'social action' theory, thereby facilitating both diagnosis and intervention. In an earlier article Orlans (1986) uses the same Lazarus and Launier definition to distinguish between the positive and negative aspects of stress, the former linked to a perception of being challenged and the latter to a feeling of being threatened. The report of a 1984 joint International Labour

Organisation (ILO) and World Health Organisation (WHO) committee session offers the following definition of psychological factors, noting that studies of such factors are usually made within the context of (occupational) stress evaluations.

> Psychosocial factors at work refer to interactions between and among work environment, job content, organisational conditions and workers' capacities, needs, culture, personal extra-job considerations and that may, through perceptions and experience, influence health, work performance and job satisfaction.
> (ILO 1984)

The report notes that a negative interaction between occupational conditions and human factors may lead to emotional disturbances, behavioural problems and biochemical and neurohormonal changes with attendant risks of illness both mental and physical.

Sutherland and Cooper (1988) exploring sources of work stress suggest that 'stress is inevitable but distress is not. They refer to the person-environment fit theory of Caplan (1983). Within this model stress is associated with a lack of fit with regard to skill, ability, capacity, needs and/or values between the person and the job. They draw attention to the significance of subjective reactivity and emphasise that the individual's perception of his/her ability to cope is the central feature in what they term the balance/imbalance, stress/distress equation.

Declining to define stress beyond the domain of research and practice involving stressors and strains, Beehr and O'Hara (1987) define stressor as 'an environmental characteristic or event thought to produce an adverse reaction in the person' and strain as a reference specifically to the adverse reactions of the individuals to the environmental event or 'stressor'.

Bailey and Bhagat (1987) refer to the work of McGrath (1976). They regard his definition of stress, which has an interactionist perspective in common with Lazarus and Launier's, as having played a major role in job stress research. Within this definition the individual's perception of the stressful demand is regarded as the catalyst. In McGrath's words:

> A potential for stress exists when an environmental situation is perceived as presenting a demand which threatens to exceed the person's capabilities and resources for meeting it, under conditions where he expects a

> substantial differential in the rewards and costs from meeting the demand versus not meeting it.
> (McGrath 1976)

Despite the frequent references in the literature to confusion and inconsistency in the definitions associated with the concept of stress there does appear to be common ground in attributing the experience of stress to interaction between 'external' environmental triggers and 'internal' perception of threat. Love and Beehr (1981) note for example that although the labels may vary, similar descriptions of the elements of job stress appear within the research. They give the following examples of the variables which are typically included under the categories of stressor, strain and coping. Stressors include role overload, ambiguity and conflict, responsibility for people and under-utilization of skills: strains include depressed mood, low self-esteem, tension, anxiety and hypertension: coping includes counselling, exercise, relaxation training, medication, changing role demands and skills enhancement. These chime with the self-reported and measured experiences and perceptions of the change agents and supporters within this investigation.

The causes of stress

Reviewing research into what he terms job distress in a presentation of the emerging role of the clinical occupational psychologist Cooper (1986) suggests that organisational sources of stress include the following factors : poor working conditions, shift work, job overload, physical danger, role in the organisation, career development, relationships at work, organisational structure and climate and home/work pressures. These factors and a related model of stress at work form the basis of the NFER Occupational Stress Indicator employed within this investigation. Cooper refers to a number of studies designed to further understanding of these factors, some of which have particular relevance for this research. Investigating stress among British police officers, Cooper *et al.* (1982) found that work overload was a major stress among operational officers (older sergeants) who perceived bureaucratic and external obstacles to effective functioning and who complained about insufficient resources. From a literature review Kasl (1973) concluded that there are srong correlations between role conflict and ambiguity and job satisfaction components. Cooper *et al.* (1978) found that the variables which predicted abnormally high blood pressure among dentists were factors related to their role stemming from their perception of themselves as 'inflictors of pain' rather than 'healers' and from the requirement that they carry out non-clinical tasks such as administrative duties. With regard to relationships at work French and Caplan (1972) found that poor relationships may be triggered by role ambiguity while Caplan *et al.* (1975) found that strong social support from peers relieved job strain. Cooper and Melhuish (1980) in a study of 196 very senior male executives discovered that they were particularly vulnerable in terms of an increased risk of high blood pressure, to the stresses of poor relationships with subordinates and colleagues and to conflicts between their values and those of the organisation.

Research into sources of stress linked to organisational structure and climate point to the significance of lack of effective consultation and participation in the decision-making process. Margolis *et al.* (1974) and French *et al.* (1972) found that increased participation resulted in higher productivity, improved performance, lower staff turnover and lower levels of physical and mental illness.

The 1984 ILO/WHO committee report includes a similar catalogue of factors related to occupational stess, citing the same studies as Cooper (1986). Additionally, under the category management and operating practices in the enterprise there is a reference to stress emanating from the implementation of changes at the workplace which has reverberations for this investigation. The report lists what it terms frequent omissions and mistakes. These include insufficient technological and psychological preparation particularly in terms of early information and training for the workforce, a failure to assess the human cost of new methods and insufficient supportive measures.

Orlans (1986) also focuses on the dynamics of change in her consideration of stress problems in organisations. She suggests that such problems often mirror each other at different levels. She cites the example of an organisation facing demands to redefine its tasks as a whole, thereby reorganising. If the response at senior level is one of severe stress leading either to procrastination or to rapid decision-making with unclear consequences then the pattern of response and effect may be replicated at group and individual levels. In an earlier survey of stress management and prevention facilities in 35 large UK organisations Orlans and Shipley (1983) report that the vast majority of respondents cited 'change' as being the most important current stressor in the context of their own organisations. It is the experience and management of change which forms the context for this investigation.

The effects on the organisation

The effects of stress both at an individual and organisational level are consistently documented within the literature. Two-thirds of the sample of organisations studied in the 1983 survey conducted by Orlans and Shipley reported negative effects from current stressors. In the report these are grouped under two broad categories described as a general breakdown of communication or destructive communication patterns beginning to operate as secondary stressors and current or potential health problems. Love and Beehr (1981) suggest that typical organisational outcomes include absenteeism, turnover and either increased or decreased quality and quantity of job performance. The reference to improved performance is made even though Love and Beehr state that examples of individual positive outcomes of stress are rare in the literature. Experience suggests that the effects of stress are most usually negative. Accordingly, within this investigation the term stress is taken to signify negative stress or distress.

Investigating possible outcomes other than strains Love and Beehr point to studies which indicate that employees exposed to stress may withdraw physically through absenteeism and turnover. They suggest that there may additionally be less-easily detected signs of withdrawal such as failure to attend meetings or to return phone calls, poor group processes in meetings and less volunteerism. Carnall (1990) demonstrates links among stress, satisfaction, self-esteem and performance using a model of coping in a situation of change which is derived from the work of Adams (1977). Within the model five stages are identified – denial, defence, discarding, adaptation and internalisation. Self-esteem rises at the denial stage, begins to decline during the defense stage, troughs at the discarding stage and rises again through adaptation to internalisation. Performance is represented as level through the denial stage thereafter accompanying self-esteem through a trough at discarding, rising again at internalisation. The implication, significant for this investigation, is that support for individuals should be based on anticipated needs at each stage whether for information, supportive listening, and empathising skill and knowledge development or positive feedback. Carnall emphasises that understanding is the key issue and that although it is difficult to empathise fully it is important to try because colleagues are likely to respond adversely if they feel no effort is being made. Intelligible information is essential.

Considering the costs of stress to the organisation Cooper (1986) asks why it is that many countries seem to be enjoying a decline in the levels of stress-related illnesses such as heart disease and alcoholism whereas the UK levels are rising.

He concludes that a significant factor is that employee sickness costs are paid by the tax payer through the National Health Service. There is no direct accountability or incentive for organisations to maintain the health of their employees. He further suggests that although indirect costs are high these are rarely calculated. It is likely that this situation will change and that companies will be expected to meet a bigger share of the costs of the sick pay scheme. Existing health and safety legislation obliges employers to establish a safe system of work with no distinction made between physical and mental well-being. This could be interpreted to cover stress-related illness. Case law will soon be established; a recent article (October 26 1993) in the **Guardian** refers to three test cases waiting in the wings. In the meantime the Health and Safety Executive is preparing a new set of guidelines for employers aimed at helping them prevent, identify and treat stress in the workforce.

An absence survey published by the Industrial Society (Balcombe, Strange and Tata 1993) based on a sample of 543 UK organisations and 49 Japanese owned companies revealed that although the main reason for absence written on certification forms is colds/influenza followed by stomach upsets, when asked to give their opinion on the true causes of absence, respondents ranked stress second after colds. Over half of all respondents were reported to feel that emotional/personal problems and stress contributed to or caused absence despite their employees reluctance to admit it. Thirty per cent of respondents reported that low morale within the organisation was affecting attendance and problems associated with alcohol and non-prescribed drugs were seen as being as important a cause of absence as workplace accidents. Other reasons given included 'poor management'.

Stress felt at an individual level is likely to affect others within the organisation and ultimately the organisation itself. A body of research into stress is focused on the phenomenon of burn-out, which is regarded as a risk particularly associated with the caring professions. Although not strictly defined as such education clearly has a people-oriented caring dimension. Maslach (1982) gives 15 definitions of burn-out, a few of which have particular significance as warnings for those acting in a change agency role. She refers to a progressive loss of idealism, energy and purpose as a result of work conditions, to a state of exhaustion, irritability and fatigue leading to a decrease in effectiveness and capability and to a debilitating psychological condition resulting from work-related frustrations. She concludes that all the definitions of burn-out include exhaustion, a negative shift in responses to others and towards one's own accomplishments. Carroll and White (1982) point to the significance of this for the organisation as a whole:

> Burnout can be infectious, in the sense that one person's burnout constitutes an additional source of stress and frustration for his or her co-workers and others with whom he or she interacts in other ecosystems. (Carroll and White 1982)

Carroll and White also highlight the opportunity which the experience of burnout can provide. It can lead to professional growth and development as well as to greater despair and trauma. Which of these outcomes is realised will depend in part upon changes made, not just within the individual but also within the organisational ecosystem. The same could be said of staff experience of stress. The spiral need not be downwards. This investigation is based on an assumption that appropriate organisational action in the form of personal support and systemic change can both alleviate personal stress and lead to organisational learning and development.

Action to alleviate stress

Although intervention programmes designed to support individuals and groups of staff are recommended and evaluated within the literature there is a consistent underlying message which warns that such remedial action will be ineffective in the long-term unless it is accompanied by action to identify and where possible remove the stressors. This is likely to entail changes at organisation level. Paine (1982), concerned with action to prevent burnout, suggests that changes should be introduced at all levels. Carroll and White (1982) recommend an ecological system analysis leading to systemic intervention to address the interactions between the individual and the salient features of the ecosystems which form the organisation. They regard the boundaries between ecosystems as contributory factors to individual stress. This is consonant with the models of change and change agency put forward by theorists such as Buchanan and Boddy (1992) referred to in the previous section. Carroll and White recommend support for individuals in the form of supervision including role feedback on performance. Shapiro (1982) also emphasises the significance of supervision in providing support to alleviate stress. She lists elements of a supervisor's potential contribution including leadership, timely and accurate communication, explicit roles and policies, support and nurturing, the provision of space for creativity and innovation and the fostering of peer networks of friendship and support. This chimes with the expressed needs of the change agents and supporters within this investigation.

Although most of the literature gives priority to sound on-going management many researchers advocate the provision of supplementary workshops focused on stress reduction techniques. There is, however, a danger in this approach that the workshop may raise expectations which can only be met by changes in organisational structure, policies and procedures. Shipley and Orlans (1988) perceive evidence of a slow cultural shift towards greater organisational interest in stress management and prevention although they believe that this development is being impeded by what they term the present economic and political climate. They also note that there is evidence of far fewer changes being introduced at organisational than at individual level, possibly because the latter are easier to effect and cheaper in the short-term. More significantly, they suggest that this may reflect powerful resistance to wider change programmes. Shipley and Orlans believe that stress research which is rooted in the traditional paradigm has a disappointingly low predictive value. Their recommendation is that a more interventionist paradigm emphasising action at the outset should be supported. They continue to present a model of research within which the researcher and subject or client share control and responsibility. This is the approach adopted by the current investigation.

The 1984 ILO/WHO committee report includes specific recommendations for intervention including training to help workers cope with stress and to help managers and supervisors recognise stressful situations. The report also emphasises that activities relating to psychological factors should aim in particular at the 'establishment of good human relationships within the enterprise, conducive to a good psychosocial climate'.

Orlans (1988), focusing on the planning of interventions, introduces the idea of a timing curve and suggests that there is an optimum time for pursuing certain intervention strategies. In a low stress situation motivation for change will be low, in a high stress situation action is likely to be difficult, even impossible as people are too busy or angry to stop and take time for 'positive learning'. She suggests that proactive action is possible when there is awareness within the organisation that stress is a problem and when the organisation is able to disregard feelings of guilt at having such problems. Once a high stress stage has been reached it may only be possible to offer 'band aid' support at an individual level.

Ganster *et al.* (1982) conducted a controlled field experiment to assess the effect of a stress management training programme with 79 social service agency employees in America. Their conclusion is interesting in that although their findings were favourable and indicated that stress management training involving cognitive restructuring and progressive relaxation can produce a statistically significant reduction in employee strain at work, they are reluctant to advocate enthusiastic adoption of such programmes. They argue that there are ethical and empirical reasons for not implementing such an intervention because it represents an inoculation approach and does not remove objective stressors from the work environment:

> Training employees to better tolerate poorly designed organizations would seem to be a less desirable strategy than one that attempts to make the organization inherently less stressful.
> (Ganster *et al.* 1982)

This is consonant with the advice given by Vanja Orlans in a comparator interview (Chapter 10) and with that given by a member of the elite sample in this investigation (Chapter 9). The research questions on which this investigation is based have been formulated to provide evidence and increased understanding related to the action required both to support individual change agents and to plan appropriate systemic development to reduce negative stress.

Coombe Lodge Report
ISSN 0305 8441

Volume 24 Numbers 7 and 8
1995

Price £16.00

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